Daily Report

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Urges UNSC To Wait on Libya Sanctions

LD1703114393 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Arab League Asks Security Council Not To Renew Sanctions Against Libya"]

[Text] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Arab League has asked the Security Council to wait and not to renew the sanctions or impose more sanctions against Libya because of the Lockerbie incident.

Informed diplomatic sources at the Arab League Secretariat say that the Arab League insists on a peaceful settlement of the Lockerbie crisis in a way that would safeguard Libya's rights and sovereignty over its territory and people. The sources reaffirmed the Arab League's support for Libya's position and its determination to work for a solution that would safeguard Libyan sovereignty without being in conflict with the UN resolutions. The sources said they hoped that the Western states and the various parties to the crisis would respond to the Arab League's resolutions and calls for dialogue and let the investigations take their course impartially so that the crisis may be resolved.

The sources confirmed that no date has yet been set for the meeting of the seven-member committee, but they added that they expect it to be held as soon as possible if a state, especially Libya, requests it.

'Abd-al-Rahman Financial Link to Iran Denied

PM1703161693 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Washington To Accuse Two Organizations Financed by Iran"]

[Excerpts] New York, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—FBI sources have revealed that the U.S. police have begun a large-scale search and pursuit campaign to arrest three people suspected of involvement in the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, the spokeswoman for Shaykh ['Umar] 'Abd-al-Rahman told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that the shaykh has not established any financial link with Iran. She stressed that "he has received donations from several parts of the world." She said that "in many cases he does not know where the donations came from." "Donation for the sake of religion is a tradition observed by many Muslims. And receiving the donations in Europe is a very natural matter." [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Abu-Sharif Says Palestinians To Go to Talks

NC1803104093 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 6

[Report by Mahir Muqlid from Tunis]

[Text] Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat, has affirmed that the Palestinian delegation will participate in the next round of talks, to be held in April. He said it is in the Palestinians' interest to attend these talks.

'Arafat's adviser praised the prominent role President Husni Mubarak is playing to push the peace efforts forward and find a swift settlement to the deportees crisis. He pointed out that the PLO always welcomes Egypt's support.

Abu-Sharif said in exclusive statements to AL-AHRAM in Tunis that he hopes the U.S. secretary of state will succeed in convincing Israel to accept the peace proposals.

Responding to a question on the future of peace in the region, Abu-Sharif said the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will continue because regional and international circumstances demand it. He said: Continuing the peace talks does not mean that the Palestinians will accept everything the Israelis propose. It is important that the Arabs try to improve the climate for peace and adhere to international legitimacy. He affirmed that boycotting the negotiations would mean submitting to a status quo the Israeli Government is trying to create.

'Arafat's adviser affirmed that Israel is not in a position to continue rejecting proposals to resolve the deportees problem, especially the U.S. proposals. He said: If the Americans' interest lies in establishing stability in the Middle East, then the obvious way to do this is to resolve the problem of the Palestinian people, starting with ending the occupation.

Abu-Sharif Comments Said To Conflict With PLO

JN1703182493 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Sulayman al-Najjab, PLO Executive Committee member and Palestinian People's Party Political Bureau member, has said that Bassam Abu-Sharif's statements on Palestinian participation in the next round of [Middle East peace] negotiations conflict with the Palestinian leadership's stand, and only represent the opinion of the person who made these statements.

He added: Bassam Abu-Sharif has accustomed us to such statements with the aim of creating confusion and undermining the credibility of the Palestinian position.

Brother Sulayman al-Najjab emphasized the Palestinian leadership's stand represented by rejecting the two letters of invitation to the bilateral and multilateral talks.

Rabin Attempt To Deal Separately With Syria Viewed

TA1703170293 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 17 Mar 93 p 9

[Editorial: "The Expected and Unexpected From the Results of the Washington Talks"]

[Text] The statement by U.S. President Bill Clinton following his lengthy meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin two days ago, and Yitzhaq Rabin's response, are indicative of the nature of the talks conducted during the U.S.-Israeli summit and future positions the two sides will adopt. Those positions relate to bilateral relations and developments in the region during the coming few days and weeks, in hopes of pressing for the resumption of the peace talks.

It is both natural and expected that the U.S. President would honor his election promises to Israel by intensifying strategic and scientific cooperation and sustaining economic and military aid. It is also logical that in return for this U.S. generosity, the Israeli prime minister would confirm that indeed Israel has a friend in the White House.

What draws attention, however, is Rabin's attempt to act on one front only. He is attempting to achieve an Israeli-Syrian agreement at any cost while totally ignoring the Palestinian dimension in his remarks and statements. The U.S. side is maintaining its silence over this Israeli plan, which seeks to deal separately with each track hoping to exert pressure on the other tracks and arouse fears about the possibility of striking a deal with one party at the expense of the other parties.

Syria has affirmed and the Palestinians have announced—on the basis of this affirmation—that the Arab parties concerned are not thinking about partial or unilateral solutions. All went to Madrid to negotiate a comprehensive and just peace. Any unilateral or partial solution will be at the expense of overall comprehensiveness and justness of that solution. This is something that was rejected by official Syrian sources only hours after the Israeli proposal of partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights, because there should either be a comprehensive solution with everyone or no solution at all.

If the Syrian Golan Heights equal the West Bank and Gaza Strip on one hand, and the occupied border strip in south Lebanon on the other, in terms of a necessary Israeli withdrawal, then Israel and the U.S. broker, which has said that it will also be a partner in the talks, should together deal seriously and objectively with all the issues on the agenda. Foremost is the Palestinian problem, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and prompt implementation of UN resolutions relating to this problem. Time is running out and the opportunity of peace available now to everyone, not just to the Palestinians, might not be repeated.

Qaddumi's Cairo Meetings With Musa Reported

JN1703201793 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Abu-al-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], head of the PLO Political Department, has met with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to coordinate moves on the deportee issue and the Middle East peace talks set to resume in Washington. The meeting was attended by brothers Mahmud 'Abbas, PLO Executive Committee member; Palestinian ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal; and Zuhdi al-Qidrah, the Fatah representative in Cairo. On the Egyptian side, the session was attended by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first under secretary at the Foreign Ministry and President Mubarak's political adviser; plus a number other aides.

Emerging from the meeting, brother Abu-al-Lutf said his talks with 'Amr Musa focused on the peace process and the need to remove obstacles in its path. The two sides, added Qaddumi, agreed on the need to strive for intra-Arab coordination to solve the deportee problem in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution [799] and international legitimacy. The road to a peaceful settlement lies in respect for international legitimacy. Without a doubt, added Qaddumi, our Egyptian brothers have a major role to play in this connection. They have a role to play in advancing a settlement under which the Palestinian people are assured of regaining their national rights in full, the PLO official said. As the key sponsor of the peace conference, the Clinton administration should work to remove the deportee obstacle in keeping with the Security Council resolution. All the Arab states, Qaddumi asserted, are agreed on the need for a resolution to the deportee problem. Several proposals have been forwarded by the Palestinians to the U.S. Administration, which, he said, must work toward securing acceptance of these suggestions. Asked whether the United States has approved the six points put forward as a way out of the deportee affair, brother Abu-al-Lutf said Washington has communicated its acceptance to the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, 'Amr Musa stated that Egypt will continue its efforts and contacts to find a solution to the deportee problem. To that end, he will pursue talks with the Palestinian side when he goes to Tunis tomorrow [18 March] for meetings of a special seven-man commission to review Libya's crisis with the West. Noting that the five nations involved in the peace process will convene a session [in Damascus] to coordinate positions on the peace process, he expressed hope that it will work out a satisfactory formula for all sides.

Deputy Delegation Head on Resuming Talks

NC1803101093 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, deputy head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks, in Jerusalem, by Fawzi al-Jindi, in Cairo, on the "Dialogue From Afar" Program; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Jindi] Dr. 'Urayqat, although the Palestinians have refused the invitation to the ninth round of peace negotiations, some observers believe there is difference between rejecting the invitation and an official announcement declaring nonparticipation in the talks. Let us begin the dialogue with this issue.

['Urayqat] First, we should note that we have been and still are engaged in continuous dialogue with the U.S. Administration. We told Secretary Christopher when he visited and U.S. envoys here in Jerusalem that if they decide to send out an invitation and set a date [for resuming the peace talks] before we tackle certain issues—especially the deportees issue and the other five points that we discussed with Christopher—this would be premature.

With our deep regret and for reasons stemming from the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue that was in progress, the U.S. and Russian Governments decided to send out an invitation. Therefore, we decided that we cannot accept this invitation, and the Palestinian leadership and the PLO decided that we should not accept the invitation. This is a frank position that indicates that we still need dialogue with the U.S. Administration to solve standing issues, especially those concerning our primary demand—that Israeli Prime Minister Rabin publicly announce that he will not order further individual or collective deportations of Palestinians.

[Al-Jindi] But Dr. Sa'ib, can we say that the Palestinians officially, publicly, and openly reject the ninth round of negotiations?

['Urayqat] We are the party most concerned with the peace process. As I repeatedly have said, it is our land that is occupied and our people who are suffering. We say, however, that sending an invitation without resolving these issues will complicate them, and that the invitation is premature. Therefore, we told the U.S. Administration that we should continue our dialogue until we are able to find substantial solutions to the problems facing us. Failing that, the Palestinian delegation cannot participate in the next round. This is the position we are discussing with the United States.

[Al-Jindi] Dr. 'Urayqat, are you likely to participate in this round on the condition that a timetable for the Palestinian deportees' return is discussed during the ninth round?

['Urayqat] This issue is not technical and has nothing to do with figures and numbers. We are talking about a fundamental and primary principle, not technical matters dealing with figures and dates. We say there is a pressing need for Rabin to announce his pledge to refrain from further deportations. This is in line with Resolution 799 and international legitimacy. We have entered the peace process, the basis of which is Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425.

When we see that there is bargaining over Resolution 799, we observe that Israel is treated as if it were above the law. For example, look at what happened during Rabin's meeting with President Clinton. The five points discussed astonished us and prompted numerous questions. First, we noticed, Clinton said he did not discuss the deportees issue with Rabin. Second, Clinton talked in tones of the cold war; that is, he talked about Israel maintaining its qualitative superiority while we are engaged in a peace process. Third, Clinton pledged to continue aid to Israel without any reduction. Fourth, there was commitment to an agreement on all technological, diplomatic, and military matters.

[Al-Jindi] But allow me to comment and affirm that at the same time, Clinton declared that 1993 will be a year of peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions. It also has been reported that Rabin announced he is willing to take the risk of peace in the Middle East.

['Urayqat] What we demand is very simple. We ask Rabin to declare that he will not order any further deportations. As you know, the Clinton administration announced officially and in writing in a message sent to us that it considers the deportations illegal. If Rabin is willing to take the risk of peace, as he put it, why doesn't he declare that he will refrain from further deportations, especially since the peace process is in progress? This does not threaten Israel's security. Deportations are illegal, as stipulated by all international standards and charters. If Rabin is unable to take a risk and announce in a simple sentence that he will facilitate the peace process, how can we expect him to take a risk by announcing his withdrawal from the Lebanese, Syrian, or occupied Palestinian territories?

[Al-Jindi] Can we say that the coordination meeting between the Arab foreign ministers involved in the peace process, scheduled to be held in Damascus on 28 March, actually will contribute to shaping a unified Arab position on the ninth round of negotiations?

['Urayqat] This meeting undoubtedly will be very important. We decided at our recent meeting in Cairo to hold the next coordination round in Damascus. We have noticed, as the world has, that the Palestinian issue has been the main focus of Egypt's diplomatic efforts during the past three months. The same applies to Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. What is important regarding the Damascus meeting is that the Arabs emerge with a unified position. We have observed that the Israeli Government seeks to split the Arab fold and destroy what remains of a meager amount of coordination by spreading fear and threatening us with papers here and

there. Therefore, the Damascus meeting will be very important, and we must emerge with a unified Arab stand that is based on Arab commitment to the peace process, international legitimacy, and on the refusal to treat Israel as being above the law.

Abu-Mazin on Prospects for Resuming Talks

PM1803100493 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 3

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, by Sawsan Abu-Husayn in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] [Abu-Husayn] The Palestinian negotiating team has refused to accept the invitation to the ninth negotiation session, while the other parties concerned accepted it. Is that Palestinian position final and irrevocable?

['Abbas] First of all, the Arab parties concerned with the peace process have all announced that they would not go to the negotiations so long as the deportees issue remained unresolved. If we go back a little, to the time of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, we would find that the deportees issue was close to a solution and a scenario was arrived at for their repatriation. Regrettably, not a single provision of the agreement achieved by the U.S. secretary on his tour was implemented. The position of the Arab parties regarding acceptance of the invitation to the negotiations was based on that [agreement] which was not fulfilled. We now have a right to ask: Why go to the negotiations, on what basis, and how would we talk with the Israelis, who have demonstrated no commitment and who have not recognized Palestinian human rights? We say that even if the negotiations start, they will not succeed and they will not continue and will not produce any results so long as Israel continues to pursue a deportation policy and to violate Arab and international legitimacy.

[Abu-Husayn] Did Faysal al-Husayni [head of Palestinian advisory team to the negotiating delegation] not receive new proposals for the settlement of the deportation issue?

['Abbas] As of now Israel has offered nothing new and has not accepted U.S. Secretary Christopher's proposal.

[Abu-Husayn] What if all the Arab parties went to the negotiations? Would you join them at the last moment so as not to miss the peace opportunity?

['Abbas] Let it be known to all: We would not go to the negotiations even if all the parties to the peace process did go. We have a basic demand. The problem of the deportees must be solved first. We will accept no pressure in this connection from anyone, although no party has exerted any such pressure because everyone knows that we are right and that we have made many concessions while Israel was placing all kinds of obstacles in the path of the negotiations.

[Abu-Husayn] Would you agree to having the deportees issue resolved around the negotiating table, that is, with the resumption of the ninth round of negotiations?

['Abbas] We negotiate for a just political settlement, and would not go to the negotiations for the purpose of having some deportees repatriated.

[Abu-Husayn] What would you expect if the ninth session was held in the absence of the Palestinians?

['Abbas] Let us not anticipate events. We hope it would not be held and we hope the Arab parties would not let us down on this.

[Abu-Husayn] It has been rumored that Rabin carries with him on his visit to Washington some new ideas regarding Palestinian autonomy. What do you think Rabin will offer, and what is required of the United States and Israel in this connection?

['Abbas] We have no knowledge of any new Rabin ideas on autonomy. You could say that what we would accept in this connection is a mechanism for the implementation of interim autonomy followed by negotiations on the final phase. There must be full agreement that the territory occupied in 1967 is Palestinian territory. As regards measures for the transfer of power, that could be done within a specific period of time. That is what we would accept if the Clinton-Rabin summit produced such a result.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you believe that the Madrid formula is still appropriate for a balanced settlement?

['Abbas] We accepted the Madrid formula grudgingly. That formula can no longer play its part in promoting steps toward a settlement, and that is because of the Israeli Government's attitude and its commitment to deportation as a firm policy it does not wish to abandon, a matter which threatens a complete collapse of any past moves, say since the Madrid conference and up to the sixth round. I recall here that when the seventh round of negotiations was held we nearly requested that there should be no participation in the eighth round because the plans submitted by the Israeli delegation were not at all in line with the Madrid formula and terms of reference, namely the land-for-peace principle and Resolution 242, and other principles on the basis of which we took part in the negotiations.

[Abu-Husayn] There have been several ideas this week about changing the previous negotiation method and introducing a new formula similar to the Camp David one. Would you accept that?

['Abbas] That has been proposed to us and we welcome and accept it, but with full U.S. commitment to playing the part of full partner, as Christopher said during his tour of the region. We understand the word partner to mean attending the meetings, sitting at the negotiating table, making proposals, settling differences, and eliminating problems. We reject the American role as observer outside the negotiation hall.

We also call on the U.S. Administration, as an effective party to the negotiations, to fulfill everything related to Palestinian human rights and to comply with what we agreed upon regarding Jerusalem. We would be taking a long stride toward peace if that happened.

[Abu-Husayn] In the same week there were Egyptian-Palestinian-Syrian contacts. What are the features of this coordination and has an action plan been worked out for the next phase?

['Abbas] We can first say that there is considerable Palestinian activity in the Arab region with the aim of explaining the Palestinian position of refusal to accept the invitation to the ninth round of negotiations. As regards Palestinian-Egyptian coordination, that is permanent and continuous on a daily basis, and the same goes for Palestinian-Syrian coordination. The visit to Syria of Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, fell within that context and its aim was to discuss the question of the five-member Arab meeting, the peace negotiations in general and how to resume them, and identification and study of the obstacles, the most important being the deportees issue and other matters related to current Israeli maneuvers.

Lack of Arab 'Consensus' on Deportee Issue Noted

TA1703174793 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 17 Mar 93 pp 1, 7

[Text] Amman—QUDS PRESS—A prominent member in the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks has said that the PLO has found itself facing an Arab position that lacks the necessary consensus over the deportee issue. He added that the prevailing climate, especially in Syria, indicates that preparations are being made for an Arab decision to go to the talks.

Dr. Sami al-Kilani, who has just returned to the occupied territories from a visit to Tunis during which he met with the Palestinian leadership, said: We appreciate his majesty King Husayn's stance and statement that the Jordanian delegation will not go to the talks as half a delegation, meaning without the Palestinians. But, so far, the Arab position on the whole has not served the Palestinian stance, which calls for persistence in solving the deportee issue and addressing the problem of human rights and the situation in the occupied territories in general.

As to whether the Palestinian leadership is being subjected to Arab and international pressure to respond to the invitation to resume the peace talks on 20 April, al-Kilani said: I do not want to call it pressure, but the situation is such that it places the PLO in a confrontational position.

When questioned on the what the Palestinian stance will be should the Arab delegations decide to respond to the peace talks invitation, al-Kilani, who was speaking to the QUDS PRESS correspondent in Amman, said: I believe that the Palestinian delegation and the Palestinian leadership, represented by the PLO, as well as the forces participating in the process and the components of the Palestinian national movement are unanimous on one thing, that it is not possible to resume the talks without solving the deportee issue in a way acceptable to the Palestinians, meaning implementation of Security Council Resolution 799. Al-Kilani added that if we are confronted with an ultimatum, then the Palestinians will have weigh the issue with utmost seriousness given the current circumstances.

Hamas Denies 'Backtracking' on Palestinian State

PM1703154893 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 4

['Ali al-Salih report: "Hamas Criticizes Abu-Mazin's Statements Regarding Its Position on Palestinian State"]

[Text] London—Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] Representative in Jordan Muhammad Nazzal has refused to comment on the statements of [PLO Executive Committee Member] Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) in which he described the movement's support for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a "retreat," a "return to reason," and a "lame position." He said that he "did not wish to engage in any altercations of that kind." Nazzal, who was talking to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, stressed, however, that "that position does not indicate any backtracking and it is not new. Shaykh Ahmad Yasin (the Hamas leader in the occupied territory who has been in an Israeli jail for over a year) took that position in 1988. It is conditional on nonrecognition of the state of Israel." He added: "I spoke about it on more than one occasion in the past. That is why I find this clamor about it strange."

Abu-Mazin had described Hamas' support for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, expressed by Nazzal himself, as a "return to reason." In a press statement yesterday, Abu-Mazin criticized Hamas' precondition that there should be no recognition of Israel if a Palestinian state is established, describing that as a "lame position." He said that "acceptance of the establishment of a state means acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242 which stipulates that all states of the region have a right to live in peace within secure borders. So, if you want your state recognized, you should recognize the other state."

Describing Hamas' approach as "political petulance," Abu-Mazin said that the PLO saw it as "a kind of retreat from the original position and a return to reason after realizing that the previous attitude was illogical in view of the new international balances."

Sources close to Hamas have deplored these statements which they described as offensive. They said that if "such a stance means a 'return to reason'—as Abu-Mazin says—then the PLO should welcome it instead of describing it as a lame position and labelling it as political petulance."

Algeria

Member of Consultative Council Assassinated

LD1703165893 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] A statement by the Algiers Security Department has announced that Dr. Hedi Flissi, a kind man and well-known intellectual, was assassinated today by two terrorists at 1430 hours in his clinic, situated at 24 Ammar Ali Road in Algiers. The statement pointed out that the two terrorists who carried out the assassination pretended that they wanted a medical examination by the doctor before putting three bullets in his head. It is noteworthy to recall that Dr. Flissi was a member of the National Consultative Council and a well-known thinker and intellectual.

Security Forces Kill Two Gunmen in Bourouba

LD1703184593 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] It has been learned from the Algiers security services that following information received from citizens by the security services that two gunmen were located at one of the apartments in Cite d'Urgence in Bourouba, the security services went to the area at about 1500. However, when they arrived there they were fired upon and, in reply, the security services opened fire killing the two gunmen. The same source added that following the shooting one of the gunmen was identified as 'Ali Ben Aissa, who used to live in the apartment; his father was also wounded by two bullets in the chest.

The same source also announced that an other two gunmen were killed in Boumerdes the day before yesterday by a joint special forces patrol made up of the army and national gendarmerie.

It has also been learned from the same source that the gendarmerie in Oran have arrested Abdelkader Boukhari, a civil servant, who is the spiritual leader of a terrorist group.

Security Services Foil 'Terrorist Activities'

LD1803000793 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpts] In connection with the security forces' pursuits, the security and gendarmerie services have foiled several terrorist activities in a number of the homeland's areas.

The Algiers security forces said that a terrorist was killed at Hussein Day, and one automatic rifle and a magazine with cartridges was recovered. The operation took place when the security services learned of the theft of a vehicle at the Harrach municipality. An ambush was laid at Hussein Day to apprehend the two thieves. One of them was shot dead when they came to steal the vehicle. It was discovered afterward that he was a terrorist. The other terrorist fled. [passage omitted]

The same sources also learned that the gendarmerie men in Oran arrested the spiritual leader of a terrorist group, and he is called Boukhari Abdelkader; he worked as a civil servant.

The administration of the national gendarmerie learned that several vehicles belonging to national corporations and private companies were stolen on the night of 15-16 March. The national gendarmerie sources explained that a Toyota vehicle belonging to KAHRIF was stolen at the roundabout of (Safsaf) in the municipality of Miftah in the province of Blida.

Another vehicle of the model Roloexpress was stolen also. It belonged to the SONALGS corporation in Arbaa.

A citizen was thrown out of his vehicle at the Larbi Mohamed farm by three persons. In Boumerdes, a hired vehicle was seized from a citizen by three armed men who robbed a gasoline station in the municipality of Heraoua.

The national gendarmerie command also stated that unknown persons sabotaged the radio of the weather station at Boudoua Bahri.

Organizations Organizing March Opposing Terrorism

LD1703181393 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In the face of mounting terrorism, which targeted civilians this time, the following organizations, the National Organization of Mujahidin [war veterans], the National Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA], the National Union of Algerian Farmers, the National Union of Algerian Youth, the National Society of Civil Servants, and the National Society of National School Graduates, have decided, following a meeting held today in order to examine the serious situation facing the country, to take a number of initiatives, including the organization of a march in Algiers next Monday; it will start at noon from Martyrs Square and proceed to 1 May Square.

The aforementioned bodies have also called upon organizations and citizens in other provinces to organize similar marches at the same time in order to show their position, rejecting violence and terrorism.

Hamas Leader: Government Move Toward France 'Erroneous'

PM1703113893 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 4

[Interview with Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of the Algerian Islamic Society Movement [Hamas], by 'Abdallah al-Haj in Jeddah; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Al-Haj] Do you believe that the political dialogue between the ruling Higher [State] Council and Algerian political forces eases the present tense conditions?

[Nahnah] The dialogue issue is now eagerly proposed as a way out of the political dilemma resulting from the struggle over power among the brothers. It has become clear that the problem now is that the (Islamic Salvation) Front [FIS] has broken up between those inside and those outside the country. This has been noted by observers of various inclinations, including FIS sympathizers, who are undoubtedly numerous. This sympathy was for the idea of Islamic rule, which was not given the right to representation or to be accepted by others—which generated violence which the important parties did not condemn. It was espoused by some elements and rejected by others. There was no unanimity over it because of the absence of leadership. This is with the proviso that not everyone affiliated to FIS adopted this new attitude. Actually the overwhelming majority of them followed the Islam they believe in—the Islam of mercy and tolerance. We believe that the authorities have the means to identify the elements which they believe are qualified to take part in a dialogue. This does not negate the fact that we have exerted our utmost efforts to mediate to restore normality to political competition in order to extricate ourselves from the dilemma and move toward stability and security. Endeavors are still continuing, because reconciliation is good for everyone. [passage omitted]

[Al-Haj] FIS supporters believe that escalating violence is a jihad. What is your opinion?

[Nahnah] We do not think that all FIS supporters approve of that. There are people who have a completely different view. Nevertheless, we fear that the word "jihad" will be interpreted in a way different from the legitimate or linguistic meaning of the word, hence deviation occurs, as is happening now. Then the jihad would become equivalent to violence and fratricide among people of one religion, one people, and one nation. The word "jihad" should not be used among brothers. Besides, the misuse of the word encourages some circles to fuel the situation so that this becomes the only commodity on which homelands rely and from which no one benefits except warmongers, arms dealers, and those who want to find a new target after the collapse of communism. [passage omitted]

[Al-Haj] Do you believe that France will support economic relaxation in Algeria?

[Nahnah] We thought—and we still do—that the Arab and Muslim brothers would react to the crisis Algeria is experiencing. But little has been done—which means that Algerian diplomacy has not been able to play its role in the required manner, or that it has been unaware of the suffocating situation the country is experiencing. So we consider [prime minister] Belaid Abdessalam's move toward France to seek aid to achieve the required relaxation is erroneous. This is because it is unreasonable for yesterday's enemy to become an old friend just by a lightning visit, unless there is something else on the horizon.

The attempts to solve the economic crisis through loans or by selling debts or supplicating the IMF achieve nothing but further decay. This is why our movement has been eager to say that the Belaid government, the government of the seventies' mentality, is unable to absorb the the tension hotbeds of the nineties at the local or international level. Besides, this government is like an unskilled swimmer swimming against the current.

The solution lies in opening the door to workers, employers, traders, peasants, and industrialists. "And for this let those aspire who have aspirations." [Koranic verse] We fear that France's assistance will be a new shackle for us.

Egypt

'Amr Musa, Arab League Chief Leave for Meeting on Libya

NC1803083993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0735 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo for Tunis this morning to attend meetings of the Arab League seven-member committee charged with following up on the Lockerbie issue, due to open in the Tunisian capital later today.

Before departing, Musa said the committee will discuss several proposals in light of the Libyan memorandum and noted that the meeting is being held within the framework of the Arab League to prevent the situation from escalating. He said the committee will focus on the Security Council resolutions and on working to prevent any change in the situation that could harm the Libyan people's interests.

Musa affirmed that contacts have been made to find a solution to this problem. He noted that in his talks with officials during his visit to Britain at the end of this month, President Husni Mubarak will focus on this subject in addition to other issues, including the situation in turbulent areas such as Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Musa said he will submit a report to President Mubarak immediately after returning to Egypt on the outcome of the seven- member committee meetings.

[Cairo MENA in Arabic at 0745 GMT on 18 March reports that Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid also departed this morning for the Tunis meetings on the Libya problem and adds: "Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said before departing that the committee's objective is to find a solution to this problem, and that all sides want a solution that recognizes Libya's sovereignty, brings stability, and prevents the situation from escalating. He said he hopes the meeting will be successful.

["The Arab League secretary general said Libya has made every effort to find a peaceful solution to this problem. He added that Libya also has demonstrated flexibility and readiness to hold dialogue with the concerned parties to prevent the situation from escalating."]

Kuwait Criticized Over Anti-Egypt Remarks

NC1703211793 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 15 Mar 93 pp 1, 3

[Article by Chief Editor Jalal Duwaydar: "Honorable Heroes, Not Mercenaries"]

[Excerpts] It is Egypt's fate to adhere to values, principles, and Arab and Islamic legitimacy. Never has Egypt shed its skin or deviated from its firm positions as many other countries do. [passage omitted]

Answering questions from the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-ANBA', President Husni Mubarak referred to Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Ahmad al-Sa'dun's excesses, with his comments on Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations during his recent visit to Egypt.

The president said he told al-Sa'dun that he did not accept his method, particularly his remarks about the Damascus Declaration, in which al-Sa'dun implied that Egypt is eager for the Declaration and views it as a means of living and support. [passage omitted]

It is perhaps astonishing that al-Sa'dun fell victim to the Damascus Declaration trick, believing Egypt hinges its survival upon its implementation. Whether his intentions were good or bad, al-Sa'dun forgot that the Egyptian people's spirit of challenge enabled them to liberate their land after licking the wounds of treachery. The Egyptian people also managed to promote the international status of their country when the Arabs, yielding to Saddam Husayn's threats at the 1979 Baghdad summit, boycotted Egypt. Kuwait was at the head of Arab countries that enthusiastically supported Saddam's foolish act; it even outbid him when it announced it would donate the money for a new building for the Arab League, which the Baghdad summit decided to transfer from Cairo to Tunis!

In his war with Iran, Kuwait paid Saddam $14 billion in cash in addition to weapons and equipment worth many more billions. Despite all this generosity and extravagance, Iraq's tyrant was ungrateful and sought to capture Kuwait and disperse its people. Egypt moved promptly and powerfully to end the aggression, which ran contrary to all values.

Yet some people in Kuwait argue and practice one-upmanship against Egypt and its courageous initiative, which mobilized the international community to liberate and rescue Kuwait from Saddam's horrible crime. They are so mistaken that they fabricated a referendum in Kuwait, with results claiming that 43 percent of Kuwaitis support the presence of foreign forces, 46 percent reject the presence of Egyptian and Arab forces, and only 16 percent support the presence of Egyptian and Arab forces in Kuwait.

Yes, it was a referendum rejecting the presence of Egyptian forces, although General Schwarzkopf, commander of the allied forces, testified that they performed heroically, that he assigned them to the most dangerous sectors of the front in the liberation war, and that they fought honorably and with superb military skills.

In response to this fabricated, nominal referendum, we can hold a genuine one in Egypt. I can confidently say that the results will show that the Egyptian people reject sending Egyptian troops to Kuwait again because of all the debate on the Kuwaiti scene.

I hope this will not be taken to mean that the Egyptian people can cast off their principles and values and take negative positions toward any threats to Kuwait, like the Iraqi aggression that turned the Kuwaiti people into refugees worldwide.

Everybody must know that despite everything, the heroic, courageous Egyptian people will lead any moves to save the people and state of Kuwait if it is subjected to any new aggression; this is Egypt's fate and historic responsibility.

Given all the clamor and false claims by some groups of Kuwaiti identity, it was natural for the president to apologize for not responding to a request by Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, to send Egyptian troops to Kuwait—a request he made during his visit to Cairo.

To those who forgot their true weight, who were blinded by hatred so they could not see the way they were during Saddam's occupation of their country, I repeat what President Husni Mubarak told AL- ANBA': Egypt's soldiers are not mercenaries, but honorable heroes in every battle of values and principles. They will always remain a shield for the homeland and for the Arab and Islamic nation everywhere and at all times.

Opposition Backs Mubarak Call for 'Full Democracy'

NC1703163293 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 1

[Editorial: "We Can Confront Impending Danger With True Democracy"]

[Text] Some days ago, President Mubarak announced that democracy is the solution for all Egypt's problems and the remedy for all Egypt's old stores of unemployment, illiteracy, and economic stagnation.

But the president appears to be talking about issues that do not interest officials, who show no reaction or conviction. If this is the remedy the president recognizes, why don't the president's men, ministers, and government believe what the president believes?

We agree with the president in all he says and calls for and even support him. This is the policy set out by al-Wafd leader Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din, a policy that guides the party and this paper.

Al-Wafd's leader has declared that there can be no reforms without democracy and no remedies for the Egyptian people's problems without full, real democracy. Democracy in doses won't do. The party leader also declared this principle when he went to the People's Assembly to voice his opinion on the dangers facing Egypt, primarily terrorism.

Regrettably, we do not see the real reaction that responds to reason. Officials are not acting or trying to turn what the president and opposition leaders call for into a tangible reality.

We tell all the officials that the course of true reforms starts with true democracy. Democracy is not mere slogans raised here or there or speeches delivered in this place or that. If the people become convinced that the government is serious about following the democratic course, then this people will be the first to stand behind the government and answer the appeal.

Egypt, Gentlemen, has reached a dangerous crossroads and has even entered the phase of real danger, which threatens the entire people. Full democracy is the only way to confront this danger.

Saddam Said Trying To Capitalize on Extremism

NC1703125093 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 1, 3

[Mahfuz al-Ansari article: "Saddam and His Son! Terrorism and the Curse of Miscalculation"]

[Excerpts] Every time I think Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has learned his lesson, every time I believe he has learned from his experiences, every time I trust that the adventures and delusions of Field Marshal Saddam have left some impact in the mind of the chief, every time I assume all this, Mr. Saddam—with the same force, momentum, and vigor—nudges me awake from this illusion and confirms that the leadership is still black or white. The color does not really matter; the important point is that it has not changed.

Time, wars, destruction, and misery leave no imprint on the man's memory. The internal balance life creates inside each of us has not been formed inside Saddam—a balance of logic, feelings, and sense. [passage omitted]

Every day the field marshal president proves that he does not learn. Every day he confirms to us that he is impulsive, that he is a new person and ruler who has never issued orders, fought wars, or been defeated. [passage omitted]

It seems that our friend is a special kind of adventurer, the calculating kind. When he does calculate, however, he always makes a mistake, even when just adding or subtracting, and even in the simplest calculations. I am not attacking President Saddam Husayn; I am merely describing a situation for which I rely on experiences and practices without exaggeration or underestimation. [passage omitted]

The occasion or reason for such talk can be summarized in and revolves round the same state or phenomenon: Field Marshal President Saddam Husayn. The Saddamite state or phenomenon is marked by lack of education; extreme weakness in mathematics; a fatal addiction to stubbornness and stagnation; and not moving from the same place where one started. He has a frightening predilection for repeating mistakes, previous behavior, and decisions.

The new calculation, and therefore the new decision, is that he believes—and as we know, some beliefs are wrong—that the terrorist and extremist elements in Egypt have a future. He believes they have some authority on the Egyptian street as well as followers and supporters throughout the country. He believes that he can jump on this bandwagon and rally the masses of the Egyptian people behind him under the leadership of political Islam, extremism, and terrorism.

He also thinks that some Western media's exaggerated and sensational reporting on incidents of extremism and terrorism in Egypt indicates tepid relations between Egypt and the United States and western Europe.

These small calculations have lost the Iraqi president. They have wasted Iraq and imposed isolation and siege on it from whose difficult results and effects the Iraqi people are suffering. However, it seems that President Saddam insists on harming the Iraqi people and keeping them isolated by continuing to miscalculate.

How did we learn this? And what are the manifestations of Saddam's miscalculations and incorrect stands? He has sent President Mubarak many messages through which he wants to open doors, the last with Abu-'Ammar [Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat]. At the same time, the head of the Egyptian affairs mission assumed his duties in Baghdad a few days ago. All this is true. But it is also true that Egypt has recently witnessed a number of violent acts and has been subjected to a mini campaign of attack and instigation.

Therefore, according to the basic logic and traditional calculations of the field marshal, he has no option but to attempt to hop on the bandwagon and hope it gathers momentum. There is no way but to cling to black hopes, expecting them to be correct.

For this purpose only, according to REUTER, he entrusted his firstborn to wage a violent attack on President Mubarak in which he calls on the Islamic groups in Egypt to topple the regime. He accused Egypt and its leader of betrayal, of betraying Iraq and its people.

The son did not spare any effort in waging the attack via the newspaper his father established for him, BABIL, which wrote on its front page that the countdown in Egypt has started and that the time has come to topple and change the regime. The paper also said that the Egyptian people have been deprived of a dignified life and have become victims of poverty and submission.

Praise be to God! Is Egypt the one to be described like this? Or is it the case of the field marshal who has imposed this same situation on his people? The field marshal and his son accuse Egypt of enabling Iran to control the Gulf by removing Iraq and its force from the balance of power in the region and participating in removing the Iraqi forces from Kuwait and liberating it.

Praise be to God! Was Egypt the one to involve the Iranians in an eight-year war? Did Egypt show any bias in defending Iraqi Arab land or did it stand alongside Iran? Or did it take a neutral stand? Was Egypt the one who capitulated and gave in to the Iranian conditions?

Was Egypt perhaps the one that attacked, took risks, and followed the advice of suspect people and agents who brainwashed the field marshal president and extracted the decision they wanted from him?

What is certain is that President Saddam, by virtue of his background, education, formation, and the duties entrusted upon him, is always fascinated by acts of terror. Terrorism attracts him and appeals to his violent fantasies. He is drawn to suicidal gangs and groups, political or otherwise. He is with them and works for them. He is among their ranks and supports their stands, even if they contradict reality.

Therefore, it is not strange that he started an attack on Egypt the day the Egyptian diplomat, the head of the Egyptian interests mission in Baghdad, arrived in Baghdad.

'Firmer' U.S. Position on Israel Urged

NC1703153993 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Mahmud Marzuq commentary: "Future of Peace Process and Responsibilities of Parties"]

[Text] Egypt continues its constructive, intense efforts to solve the Palestinian deportees problem—one of the main obstacles affecting the next round of peace talks—and to reach a united Arab stance before 19 April, the date set by the peace conference cosponsors for holding the ninth round of peace negotiations. These efforts come amid the possibility that the Palestinians will not attend the next round before the deportees issue is solved.

Many ideas have been raised during these Egyptian efforts, ideas that aimed to unite the Arab stance on the issues of the negotiations and the deportees. Observers have asserted that Egyptian diplomacy is focusing its efforts on two specific fronts: The first is the Egyptian-Syrian front and the second the Palestinian front. The aim is to achieve a united Arab stance on all current developments in the region.

It was within this context that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' visited Cairo and held important talks with President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. Afterward, the Syrian foreign minister confirmed that there are Egyptian-Syrian ideas to be conveyed to the American side and to the other parties concerned with the peace process in preparation for the meeting of the cordon states' foreign ministers in Damascus after 'Id al-Fitr [around 23 March]. Informed sources say the Egyptian and Syrian sides agreed that President Mubarak's visit to Washington will be a very important opportunity for the Arabs to raise their just cause with President Bill Clinton's administration and to get acquainted with its concepts of the peace process in the region. The sources add that President Mubarak's visit to Washington might strengthen the possibility of holding a summit between Presidents Clinton and Hafiz al-Asad in Europe this spring.

Through statements by senior officials and by President Clinton himself at the joint news conference he held with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin following their talks in Washington, the U.S. Administration was eager to emphasize its commitment to the peace process and to play the role of the full partner to achieve a peaceful settlement based on the UN resolutions. This stance should be translated into mechanisms that help to implement the UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 799, which demands the return of all the Palestinian deportees.

Everyone hopes President Clinton's meeting with Rabin will result in a firmer U.S. position that pressures the Israeli Government to change its intransigence on the Palestinian deportees. And the meeting's outcome is a new test for the U.S. Administration in dealing with Israel's intransigence and for Washington's practical implementation of the role of full partner—a role it has repeatedly said it wants to play—especially as the Clinton-Rabin meeting was held after the U.S. Administration was briefed on all the facts of the region following U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of Arab capitals and Israel.

This test for the U.S. Administration has another important aspect, namely that the next round of talks—which is threatened by the Israeli stance—will be the first one the new U.S. Administration is sponsoring. So this Administration must now define the limits of its hoped-for role in the peace process. Such action will have an automatic bearing on the next round and on the future of the peace process.

The Arab parties are the other side that will decide the future of the ninth round of bilateral negotiations. Intensive Arab contacts are now under way and, as was recently announced, they will culminate in the meeting

of the cordon states' foreign ministers in Damascus after 'Id al-Fitr. We know that all the Arab parties are devoted to the firm, legitimate, and historic Arab rights. So we are confident that all these parties will be eager to have a united Arab stance and to deal with Israel's prevarications and ploys by acting in such a way as to prevent Israel from achieving its short term and strategic objectives and deny it the opportunity of doing so. This way they will enable the peace process to continue no matter how long it takes, because it would be difficult to reactivate the peace process if it is halted now. Egypt has stressed this maxim repeatedly and translated it into joint action and persistent efforts to defend the cause and keep it under the international spotlight. We hope these contacts and meetings will end with a united Arab stance that accurately balances between the Arab desire for the peace process and developments that must be considered and exploited collectively so as to benefit Arab interests in every issue, be it the deportees issue or that of Middle East peace.

'Effective' U.S. Role in Peace Process Urged

NC1803052593 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2150 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM calls on the United States to play an effective role in the peace talks to prevent Israel from renewing the crises it creates, such as that of the Palestinian deportees. In its 18 March editorial, the paper says the deportees issue may not only obstruct the peace talks, but could also seriously demoralize the governments concerned and create further psychological barriers that could have been overcome in previous years.

AL-AHRAM states that repeated Israeli inconsistencies would not only discourage intentions on peace, but would also strengthen calls for violence and change desire for peace into war. The paper sees a need to raise the issue of halting the deportation of Palestinians through an unequivocal decision committing Israel before the United States. The paper says the parties to the conflict should pledge not to deliberately create any crisis and to solve quickly any trivial problems that might affect the progress of the negotiating process.

Assembly Committee Urges Action on Sudan

NC1703191493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1501 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—Assistant Foreign Minister Muhab Muqbil has said that the Sudanese Government's closure of the Cairo University branch in Khartoum was expected. The decision, he added, is in line with the provocative measures adopted by the Sudanese authorities against Egypt from time to time and follows their takeover of Egyptian schools there.

Speaking before a meeting of the People's Assembly Arab Affairs Committee today, chaired by Committee Chairman Dr. Tulbah 'Uwaydah, Muqbil said Egypt is prepared for any new Sudanese measure. He referred to steps that could be taken against the Egyptian irrigation mission in Sudan, which includes over 120 Egyptians. He said the situation has been assessed and revealed that such measures would not affect the quantity of Nile water received by us now or in the long term.

Muqbil pointed out that the job of the irrigation mission in Sudan could be done by modern scientific devices determining the water level of the Nile and any flooding. He described the recent Sudanese stance as irrational, adding that the Sudanese have harmed themselves. He said the cost of running the Cairo University branch in Khartoum placed a major financial burden on the university, adding that education in Egypt needs 55 million pounds a year. He said the Sudanese authorities cordoned off the university campus with armored vehicles, acted in an uncivilized manner, and smuggled antiquities and movable assets, which we want back as our property. He went on to note that Egypt's rights over everything there are documented and said that further measures could be taken against a cement company there and its installations.

On the Hala'ib committee meetings, Muqbil [who chaired the Egyptian side to the meetings] said the Sudanese were clearly and completely intransigent and put conditions to the Egyptian side, including returning the situation in Hala'ib to what it was a year ago. He described the situation in Sudan as extremely bad and said the price of every commodity had skyrocketed.

Committee Chairman Dr. Tulbah 'Uwaydah said Egypt's dues there amount to approximately 25 billion pounds [figure as received].

[In a related, Cairo-datelined report, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1510 GMT on 17 March carries a statement dated 17 March by the People's Assembly Arab Affairs Committee saying the "recent severe deterioration" in Egyptian-Sudanese relations is "a result of decisions issued by the Sudanese Government that harm the interests of the Sudanese people." Pointing to relations between the two peoples and the Egyptian cultural role in Sudan, the statement says: Appreciating the Egyptian Government's responsible position toward these provocations by the ruling leaders of fraternal Sudan and eager to maintain the longstanding and fraternal relations between the two people so that these relations may not reach the point of crisis or confrontation, the committee calls on the government to take immediate and decisive measures to deter anyone who dares to harm Egypt, its sovereignty, national security, or interests." Concluding its statement, the committee emphasized that it "fully backs President Husni Mubarak's serious warning to the irresponsible rulers of Sudan that any attempt to harm Egyptian national security will be met with a stronger and more ferocious response."]

New York Bombing Said To Benefit Israel

NC1703132893 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 9

["Issues and Views" column by Ihsan Bakr]

[Excerpts] It is too early to reach conclusions and level charges until the investigation into the World Trade Center explosion in New York is concluded. Whether Muhammad Salamah was the real perpetrator, a participant, or is completely innocent of the bombing, the issue will remain much more important and serious than the man himself and his role in the operation. The Arab and Muslim public only demand that the issue remain in the hands of the law so it will not be exploited by mean people. The accused, unless new evidence comes to light, is a single Arab—not the Arab community in America, and a single Muslim immigrant—not the Muslim world.

Until Muhammad Salamah is proven innocent or guilty, and until his partners and supporters are known, the Arab and Islamic community in the United States will face all sorts of injustices, accusations, and psychological repercussions. U.S. President Bill Clinton asked Americans not to prejudge those responsible for the explosion, saying that when they become known, he alone will decide the type of response. His statement came in time, because it warns against making judgments in a case shrouded by ambiguity and contradictions. Despite the U.S. President's warning, a wave of threats against Muslims in America began to surface and Jewish demonstrations were staged against the Muslims.

So far there has been no concrete evidence that Islamic groups are the ones which carried out the New York incident. [passage omitted] Attempts to accuse Islamic groups or so-called fundamentalists, because they are the ones challenging the West following the collapse of communism, must be carefully considered. Whenever a crime or a terrorist action takes place, the question should be asked: Who is the party that will benefit from it? In the New York incident, fingers were pointed at three main parties. Then the field was narrowed to two—the Palestinians and the fundamentalist groups—after the Arabs were excluded. [sentence as published]

First, we must state that the Islamic groups could not have carried out such action for one simple reason: They have no interest in carrying out an action that could embarrass them and threaten their position and freedom in the United States. The Islamic groups may disagree with U.S. policy—and they do. They may also disagree with the American way of life—and they do. But they could not have undertaken an action which would have such serious repercussions for them. Many of them could find no better place than the West, and particularly the United States, to take refuge in.

The Palestinians could not have fallen into such a trap either. They could not have committed an operation like the one that took place in New York, because they could not gain anything from it. No Palestinian party, irrespective of its affiliation or whether it accepts the peace process, would have undertaken such an operation because it would harm all of them.

Yes, and we say it frankly, look for Israel's and the Mosad's hand in this dirty operation. Israel is suffering from international isolation as a result of the UN Security Council resolution condemning its expulsion of the Palestinians and calling for their return. Israel has been besieged by the peace process and could not break out of it, so it resorted to collective expulsion of the Palestinians from the occupied territories to force the Arabs to boycott the peace talks. But the Arabs did not fall in the trap and insisted on the return of the deportees and the resumption of the peace talks. Israel continuously repeats the tune that the Arabs are all terrorists and that the recent Palestinian flexibility in the peace talks is just a comedy. [passage omitted]

It is in Israel's interest to tarnish the Arabs' image, undermine Arab-American relations, and undermine the Arab and Islamic communities in Europe and America through its agents. [passage omitted]

No one in the Arab capitals supports or encourages terrorism, and no one in the Palestinian leadership supports terrorist operations designed to tarnish the picture of Palestinian national struggle. What is required now is for the Arab capitals to make an effort to clarify the facts. Even if Muhammad Salamah was the one who carried out the New York explosion, what is needed, first and foremost, is for everyone to know who was behind Muhammad Salamah. Otherwise, the operation will remain a puzzle and the sword of accusation will remain drown over the heads of all Arabs and Muslims, rather than the individual who has sold himself to the enemies of Arabism and Islam.

Sale of AL-HAYAH 'Abd-al-Rahman Interview Banned

NC1803113093 Paris AFP in English 1045 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Manama, March 18 (AFP) - Egyptian cleric Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman denied being the spiritual guide of the fundamentalist Jama'ah al-Islamiyah [The Islamic Group] but condoned its attacks on Egyptian police and tourists in an interview published Thursday [18 March].

Acquitted three times of crimes in Egypt, including sanctioning the 1981 assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat, the cleric faces an expulsion order from the United States in the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing.

'Abd-al-Rahman has dismissed any links with three suspects indicted Wednesday in New York in connection with the bombing, which killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

"Many people say that I am the emir (spiritual guide) of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah. I don't know where they get that from," he said in an interview with the London-based AL-HAYAH newspaper which is printed in several Arab capitals.

The Egyptian authorities banned the issue from being sold because of the interview, informed sources said in Cairo.

"I do not speak on behalf of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah but I believe that when these young people attack tourists, they are targeting tourism to embarrass the government and not to kill tourists as such," he said.

'Abd-al-Rahman said "some tourists are a menace to Islam" and justified al-Jama'ah attacks on police because they were following government policy. [passage omitted]

U.S. authorities on Wednesday indicted Muhammad Salamah and Nidal Iyad, both 25, in the bombing accusing them of damaging the 110-story twin towers "by using an explosive device causing the death of six persons."

Ibrahim al-Jabruni, the third suspect, was charged with obstruction of justice and fraud.

Salamah and al-Jabruni worshipped at a New Jersey mosque where 'Abd-al-Rahman preached.

"I don't know any of these men who probably frequented the mosque where I pray," he told AL-HAYAH in an interview which took place in Los Angeles.

A U.S. judge has upheld a expulsion order against 'Abd-al-Rahman. The Immigration and Naturalization Service wants to deport him for failing to disclose in 1991 that he was a polygamist and had been convicted of falsifying a check in Egypt in 1987.

'Abd-al-Rahman's lawyer said he would fight the order.

The al-Jama'ah, which claimed responsibility for an attack on a tour b?n?outside the antiquities museum in Cairo on Wednesday, has warned it would retaliate if any harm comes to 'Abd-al-Rahman, who has come under scrutiny following the February 26 New York bombing.

Islamic Group Claims Bus Attack; More Asyut Clashes

NC1703123693 Paris AFP in English 1141 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Asyut, Egypt, March 17 (AFP) - Security forces battled Muslim militants in this fundamentalist hotbed in southern Egypt on Wednesday [17 March], leaving at least eight people dead, police said.

The fighting broke out as security forces swept into fundamentalist strongholds in different parts of the town. At least six militants and two policemen died, and nine policemen were wounded.

Security forces rounded up 35 fundamentalists.

Members of al-Jihad, a wing of the underground al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah [Islamic Group], opened up with Kalashnikovs and threw bombs as the security forces moved in to arrest them, police said.

Police overpowered the fundamentalists in several parts of the town but gunmen holed up in an apartment block in the Firyal district were still keeping them at bay, preventing the recovery of the bodies of the two dead officers.

There was no word of casualties among the fundamentalists.

Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya also claimed responsibility for the bombing of a tour bus in Cairo on Tuesday, and threatened more attacks.

Asyut, a town of 300,000 inhabitants 400 kilometres (250 miles) south of Cairo, is a bastion of the al-Jama'ah, which is waging a violent campaign targetting tourists, security forces and Coptic Christians.

Its spiritual leader, Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, lives in exile in the United States and his name has been linked to the bombing of the World Trade Centre. He once taught theology at Asyut University.

More than 100 people have died in the al-Jama'ah campaign which has badly damaged the tourist industry, with bookings down by half and losses estimated at 700 million dollars.

Fundamentalists seized control of Asyut after the assassination of president Anwar al-Sadat in October 1981 and held it for four days before the army retook it, killing around 100 people.

Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, in a statement issued Wednesday, said it bombed the tour bus outside Egypt's main antiquities museum the previous day which caused damage but no casualties.

The group said it placed several time bombs around the museum as part of its campaign to "hit tourism but not tourists" and warned the government's security measures were bound to fail.

Three tourists have died since the group launched its campaign last year.

The bombing was "to avenge the massacre of unarmed faithful" at Al-Rahman mosque in Aswan last week, according to a communique from the group.

Security forces killed at least eight people when they raided the mosque looking for fundamentalist militants. Lawyers in Aswan said another two have since died of their injuries.

The attack was aimed at showing "the capital will be the scene of vengeance" which it described as its "irreversible and legitimate policy."

It warned of "violent retaliation" in the centre of Cairo if the security forces did not immediately halt a big security operation in Al-Badari area of the Asyut region, al-Jama'ah bastion.

Around 800 police, backed by helicopters and armoured vehicles, rounded up 150 people in a sweep through the al-Badari region on Monday which left one policeman and a fundamentalist dead.

Further on Clashes in Asyut

NC1703130393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1204 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Asyut, 17 Mar (MENA)—Security forces in Asyut today clamped down on an extremist stronghold in the Shirkat Firyal district.

An encounter erupted between the two sides when extremists began shooting automatic rifles at the police. A number of policemen and extremists were killed in the shootout.

Clashes between the police and extremist elements wounded five, a noncommissioned officer, and three soldiers. Six extremists were killed during the shootout. The body of one of the extremists was found inside the extremists hideout, while the other bodies were found on the street. The extremists were killed in a police chase as they were trying to escape.

Police Captain 'Abd-al-Rasul Muhammad, an investigative officer in the al-Qusiyah police station, was martyred during the clash.

The number of casualties among the extremists and terrorists rose to 10, when four others were killed in a shootout with the police. One of the extremists threw an incendiary bomb at a police vehicle taking part in the security campaign.

The security forces arrested 35 extremist and terrorist elements who turned themselves in without resistance. Automatic weapons and ammunition were apprehended.

One of the terrorists killed is Ahmad Zaki al-Sharif, the leader of the military wing of al-Jihad Organization in Asyut and one of the most dangerous extremist figures in the area. He was the prime suspect in the assassination of Lieutenant Colonel Mahran 'Abd-al-Rahim, a State Security Intelligence officer in Asyut, and his eight-year-old son, Muhammad, who were hit by more than 30 bullets two weeks ago near Sidfa while the officer was travelling to visit his family in the village of al-Duwayr. Anwar Mahmud 'Abd-al-Rajjal and his brother, Mustafa, both leading members of the extremist groups in Dayrut al-Sharif, were also killed.

Security investigations have disclosed that among those killed are a number of extremists against whom court rulings have been passed in connection with various terrorist cases. They are Sulayman 'abd-al-Jawwad 'Abd-al-Hafiz, Mahmud Khalfan al-Maghribi, and Ahmad Sayyid Hasan Bakhati, who is the group leader in Western Asyut area.

Security forces launched a major security campaign against extremist group and terrorist strongholds in Asyut early this morning, acting on information that a number of them were present in building no. 9 at Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq Street in the Firyal area and in an apartment in Asyut's al-Yusri area. The information indicated that the extremists and terrorists were using those locations to meet and plan their terrorist operations against security men and to disrupt local security. Troops from the Asyut Security Directorate, State Security Intelligence, and the Central Security Forces took part in the campaign. The extremists quickly opened automatic weapons fire at police when they saw them cordoning off their strongholds. An incendiary bomb was thrown at a police vehicle, compelling police to open fire.

Paper Views Tourism Threats, Terrorists for Hire

NC1703132093 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 14

["Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab]

[Text] My friend the tourism expert Dr. 'Adil Husni told me that the lowness and depravity of terrorists has reached the point that they are contacting tourism companies abroad warning them against organizing tours to Egypt or their groups will be attacked.

'Adil Husni pointed out that there are many foreign companies who asked him and the rest of his colleagues working in this field whether the terrorists' threats are serious or whether the issue is nothing more than a continuation of the dirty war against the Egyptian economy.

He told me that all of them had responded that Egypt, despite the events that have taken place there recently, still occupies the top position among countries with the highest level of security.

Despite all of this, foreign tourist companies view the subject with great caution, fearing that their reputation will be harmed if their agents, God forbid, are harmed in any way.

Therefore, it has become clear that terrorism is not just a local product, but there are elements supporting it from abroad. I also believe that the international community has succeeded in getting ahold of some suspect fingers. The United States intends to work on internationally isolating the al-Bashir government and al-Turabi [leader of the National Islamic Front] in Sudan. The same situation applies to Iran, which unfortunately has used Sudanese territory as a center for training terrorists and a point for exporting it to many other Arab and non-Arab nations.

The disgusting and detestable fact is that Tehran employs a terrorist for $12 a month. In other words, a person sells his conscience, religion, and morals for peanuts; then along come the mantled men of Tehran claiming they are Muslims.

Every day these mantled men wage attacks on Egypt over their radios at the same time they are sending messengers to work on restoring relations with it. It is the epitome of contradiction. How can you urge people to kill, rob, and terrorize the same people with whom you want to have relations and contacts?

It is essential that Cairo take its time and move slowly before thinking of such an issue. Otherwise, it will provide Iran, in the easiest way possible, with the keys to performing its suspect deeds under the protection of a diplomatic umbrella.

If hatred has seized the hearts of Sudan's rulers toward Egypt and the Egyptians, automatically pushing them to turn themselves into a tool for Iran's imams, then what can be said about the sons who were the fruit of that good earth, but who have placed themselves at Satan's disposal?

We have always been honest men of values and morals. We know what is shameful and all our contemporary and old historic records affirm that "My cousin and I stand against the foreigner." What has changed these values now?

At any rate, rectifying this situation lies in our hands, not the hands of other people.

'Terrorists' Move to Military Prison Approved

NC1803114293 Cairo MENA in English 0825 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, March 18 (MENA)—The Supreme Military Court resumes its third session on Saturday [20 March] at the military courts complex in Hikestep to try terrorists accused of striking at tourism and national economy, and disrupting public order.

The 49 defendants, seven of whom are still at large, had requested during the second session to be moved to one of the military prisons and their request had been accepted.

Financial Official Comments on 1992 Grants, Loans

NC1703145193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—A responsible source at the Ministry of International Cooperation has said that Egypt obtained approximately $2.5 billion worth of grants and loans last year. This money was used to finance infrastructure projects and projects in universities, scientific research centers, and hospitals. The source added that some of the money was used to import commodities, equipment, production necessities, raw material, and spare parts for the public and private sectors. The official said he expects Egypt to receive $822 million in economic aid from the United States this year, noting that U.S. fiscal year begins on 1 October.

Two-Year Agricultural Agreement Signed With Cuba

NC1703162293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1440 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—An agricultural cooperation protocol was signed by the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Cuba at the Agricultural Ministry today.

The agreement was signed on Egypt's behalf by Dr. Yusuf Wali, deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture and land reclamation, and on Cuba's behalf by Cuban Ambassador to Egypt Orlando Lancis Suarez.

The two-year agreement includes the promotion of bilateral agricultural and economic cooperation through the exchange of joint research, technical and scientific information, and expertise and experts in various agricultural fields of interest to both countries.

Dr. Sa'id Nassar, a technical adviser at the ministry, said a joint action team will be formed from the Agricultural Ministry, the agricultural research center, and the Cuban Embassy in Cairo to follow up the plan of action and overcome the obstacles that face its implementation.

Japan To Grant $10.8 Million for Rice Silos

NC1703162193 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 14 Mar 93 p 6

[Text] Under an agreement signed yesterday, Japan will grant Egypt $10.8 million to fund the establishment of a number of rice storage centers, which will be set up in various governorates. The Ministry of Supply will implement the project. The agreement was signed for Egypt by Dr. Maurice Makramallah, minister of state for international cooperation; and for Japan by Japanese Ambassador in Cairo Taizo Watanabe.

Sudan

Iranian Aid Sought Against 'Imminent U.S. Aggression'

PM1803101093 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Al-Bashir Seeks Aid From Hashemi-Rafsanjani To Confront 'Imminent Aggression'"]

[Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Iranian diplomatic sources said yesterday that Sudan's military government has appealed to Iran for "urgent aid" to confront an "imminent U.S. aggression."

The Sudanese request came in a private message from Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, chairman of the Salvation Revolution Command Council, to Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Navy has declined to confirm or deny Egyptian reports that one or more Iranian warships are anchored at Port Sudan or the Red Sea. Reports said that the Sudanese message was handed to Rafsanjani via "a senior Sudanese official," but they did not disclose his name.

One source said yesterday that "the situation in Sudan is being studied and the Higher Defense Council is expected to look into the options available in the coming week or two."

Some reports say that the council is split over the issue, as some influential figures want to keep Iran out of what they term "the Sudanese swamp."

Minister Discusses U.S. Visit, Hala'ib Dispute

JN1703213193 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1940 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Interview with 'Ali al-Haj Muhammad, Sudanese economic planning and investment minister, by Hasan al-Husayni in London, carried within the "Today's Guest" feature; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Husayni] Mr. Minister, you recently visited Washington where you met with U.S. officials. What topics were discussed and were the results positive?

[Muhammad] The visit to Washington had two parts: The first was to attend an African Affairs Committee session at the U.S. Congress in Washington regarding the issue of Sudan. The second part was to acquaint the new U.S. Administration and various U.S. officials on what has taken place concerning the issue of peace in Sudan and what took place at the meetings in Entebbe in Uganda, and afterwards at the meeting in Abuja. These were the objectives of the visit.

With respect to the first part, I attended the congressional committee's session and it was very obvious that the information brought up during the meeting contained false and unsubstantiated reports, most of which were taken from the local press, both in Washington and London. This information contains many misleading facts. The best example of this is that they spoke about in Congress regarding the sale of children, as if there is stock market in Sudan for selling children. This is just pure imagination. This is what we told the members of Congress. We told them that if the Congress is to adopt a stand on Sudan on the basis of misleading information, then we believe this would be very tragic. That is why we invited all of the members of the African Affairs Committee to visit Sudan at any time at the end of April, or at the beginning of May, to meet with members of the National Council and hold discussions with them on these issues. Then, they could visit many areas in Sudan to see first hand what is Sudan's stand. After doing this, they can return and make the decisions they deem fit. But, if this is the information they receive, then this is not enough. When I met with several members of Congress, such as Senator [as heard] Frank Wolf who visited southern Sudan and who took charge of the matter in Congress, we found that all his information was based on reports by Sudanese opposition papers in London, such as the SUDAN DEMOCRATIC GAZETTE. Everyone knows that such information is misleading and has nothing to do with reality.

[Al-Husayni] Mr. Minister, have you met with members of President Clinton's administration?

[Muhammad] Yes, I met with Mr. (Quayne) and his group in the African department. We discussed several issues, but most of our discussions focused on the issue of the south, peace, what took place in Entebbe and Abuja, and the upcoming meeting in Abuja. The discussion dealt with all of this.

[Al-Husayni] At the mention of Entebbe and Abuja, you declared two days ago that the second round of negotiations between the Sudanese Government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, under John Garang, will help in settling many issues and will facilitate the attainment of an agreement. What is the nature of such an agreement and will it lead to peace?

[Muhammad] We are adding to what we reached during the first Abuja meeting in May 1992. At this meeting, we discussed essential issues such as the question of identity, the relationship between religion and the state, the issue of power sharing, sharing of resources, and the question of Islamic shari'a. All these issues were discussed at the first Abuja meeting. There was a consensus on some of these issues. The task of the second Abuja meeting will be for us to reach a practical formula and to work out an agreement on a comprehensive peace for Sudan, particularly concerning the issues I have mentioned. This is what will take place in the second Abuja meeting. We hope this will take place as soon as possible and that the conferees will reach decisions that help the operation for peace.

[Al-Husayni] Sudanese political and military sources reported yesterday that Sudanese military reinforcements were in the 'Arus area, close to Hala'ib. What can you tell us about the Hala'ib problem and the border dispute with Egypt?

[Muhammad] This is not a border dispute per se; Hala'ib is Sudanese territory—something supported by facts, history, and legal evidence, as was made clear during meetings last October between Egyptian and Sudanese officials. It seems that the Egyptians refuse to acknowledge the facts, hence their military occupation of Hala'ib. We believe the situation has been escalated by the Egyptian occupation of the territory. We are talking about Egypt's military occupation of Hala'ib. This is how things stand right now.

[Al-Husayni] Are any efforts being made to work out this dispute?

[Muhammad] Certainly. For our part, we have made many efforts. The good offices of [Syrian] President Hafiz al-Asad and PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat led to the Sudanese-Egyptian committee meeting in Khartoum last month. But the Egyptian delegates on the committee kept saying they had no mandate. It seems that the meetings are meant to consecrate the status quo and the occupation of Hala'ib rather than to find a solution. In any case, there is going to be a committee meeting in Cairo in the next few days. We hope this meeting will prove more successful and that the Egyptian delegates will come with a mandate.

[Al-Husayni] Iranian diplomatic sources say the Sudanese Government has solicited urgent Iranian assistance to cope with an imminent American aggression, and Egypt warned of the consequences if Sudan allowed Iranian forces on its soil. How accurate is the report, and what is your reaction?

[Muhammad] This is not true; the report is an Egyptian fabrication. Sudan has definitely not sought any support or aid from external forces. Thank God, Sudan can manage on its own in terms of national defense and has no need for any outside help. These are fabrications that have no basis in truth.

[Al-Husayni] What sort of links does Sudan have with fundmantalist and Islamic groups? Allegations have been made that in league with Iran, the Sudanese Government is backing and underwriting Islamic extremists in the Arab world and Africa?

[Muhammad] The Sudanese Government has no links with Islamic movements; it only maintains relations with governments. The Sudanese Governement is not linked to any Islamic movements or groups. There is no extremism in Sudan. Sudan does not export anything. As a matter of fact, Egypt has domestic problems and there are problems between the Egyptian authorities and Egyptian Islamists with which Sudan has nothing to do. It seems that these internal Egyptian problems have gotten out of hand. As is known, Sudan has neither the material nor manpower or scientific resources to attempt anything in Egypt or anywhere else. We do not export extermism or anything else for that matter. If anything, we are on the receiving end. Such accusations are meant to divert attention from what is taking place in certain countries. However, the world understands what is happening in the region, especially in Egypt. This is an internal Egyptian concern and must be addressed as such. I do not think that pointing accusing fingers at Sudan will solve the problem. This is a domestic Egyptian affair that must be tackled and sorted out by the Egyptian leadership itself.

Al-Bashir Says University Change Done for Students

EA1603213693 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in English 1800 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Revolution Command Council [RCC] chairman, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, has emphasized that the decision of setting up al-Nilayn University was taken for the interest of the students. During a meeting with a delegation of the al-Nilayn University students' union, Gen.al-Bashir stated that the decision to transform the former Cairo University Khartoum branch to al-Nilayn University was issued in response to the will of the students and for the interest of the academic pursuit.

Following the meeting, head of the delegation and the chairman of the university students' union, Ahmad Husayn Adam, said that Gen. al-Bashir revealed that he asked deputy chairman [of the RCC], Major Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, to supervise the campaign for attracting support to the new university.

Tunisia

Communist Party Plans Reform as Renewal Movement

LD1203144093 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 12 Mar 93

[Excerpts] It is expected that an announcement will be made during the forthcoming congress of the Tunisian Communist Party on the birth of the Renewal Movement. What is this movement and what are its aims and objectives? These questions were addressed by correspondent Moubdi Hanaoui to Mohamed Harmel, the secretary general of the Tunisian Communist Party:

[Begin recording] [Hanaoui] Mohamed Harmel, what are reasons or the motives for the creation of this new party or the renewal of the Communist Party?

[Harmel] The Tunisian Communist Party is one of the oldest national parties. It has played an important role in Tunisia's history, and has introduced new social, democratic and rational ideas into the national movement and into the democratic movement. [passage omitted] However, we have been aware for a few years that the old form has reached its historical limits. [passage omitted] The old forms are no longer convincing, nor are they capable of fulfilling their roles in the best possible way. In that context, the Renewal Movement emerged; its name is indicative of its content and references. [passage omitted]

[Hanaoui] One last question about the date of the announcement.

[Harmel] The announcement will be made at the congress. The congress will be held in mid-April over two days. On the second day we will announce the emergence and birth of the Renewal Movement.

Kuwait

Amir Addresses Nation 17 Mar

LD1803024093 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Address to the nation by Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah on the occasion of the last 10 days of Ramadan on 17 March; place not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Brothers and sisters, on these dear occasions we are always called upon to a fresh reading of the pages of our history so that we will be aware and will not go astray, so that we will remember and not forget. A reading with insight and reflection on the history of Kuwait will prompt us to stop at some objective realities spelled out by this history.

The first of these realities is that oil wealth was not the only motive behind the ambitions in Kuwait at this time in our history. Kuwait has been the focus of a lot of ambitions in its history.

The second reality is that the people of Kuwait have never bowed their heads due to their small number or the lack or scarcity of resources. Rather, this state of affairs may have been the reason for this people's ability to challenge and to innovate. Our ancestors embraced the sea and dived to its depths to bring out its treasures. With science and patience, they rode its waves to the capitals of commerce. They even spread life in quarters neglected by their own people.

The third reality is that Kuwait has been involved in the past in numerous battles. It has tasted victory but has not been vain; it has known defeat but has not been broken. The obvious reality in the history of Kuwait is that we have never initiated aggression against anyone, near or far. Our forefathers never used the weapon of hatred or held grudges against the near or far. [passage omitted]

We have learned from the history of Kuwait that its life and its security is the making of the sons of Kuwait and their efforts. It provided them with a home abode and they made it prosperous. It embraced them and they protected it.

We have also learned from the history of Kuwait to seek friendship and concord, not to stir sedition or call for disputes. Although this course has often cost a high price, its return, thanks to God, was in our favor.

Brothers and sisters, this invitation to read our history and reread it afresh does not mean that we should sink into the past, miss out on the present, or tire our eyes from looking to the horizons of the future. One of the benefits of this reading is that we will stick doggedly to our noble values and the lofty characteristics of our society and its heritage of ethics, customs, and sound traditions.

From the dawn of our history we have believed in consultation, democracy, and freedom in the interests of Kuwait and the people of Kuwait. Our democracy springs from our society, which is governed by its nature, philosophy, and ethics.

Our brothers in both the legislative and executive bodies are aware of the crucial situation through which Kuwait has been passing. The freedom we are enjoying must be guided according to the circumstances the country is experiencing. What is beneficial to it in ordinary circumstances might not be suitable in abnormal circumstances. This is a matter in the awareness of every Kuwaiti who places the interests of his country above any other consideration.

Today we are called upon to join a strong, united rank based on values and principles which spring from the roots of this land and its good people, who are known for their solidarity, cohesion and sympathy with one another, for the sake of peacefully overcoming all that stands in our way—barriers and matters which are known to you. With cooperation and solidarity, God willing, we will reach the shore of safety.

The blessing of freedom which we all enjoy is the means of true expression, the honesty of outspokenness, and the light of frankness. The aim is to lift up our society and tackle its problems on sound and objective bases. It is not our intention to interfere in something which is not our business, to take sides on issues which are not our concern, or to push ourselves into quarrels which we can well do without.

Brothers and sisters, prosperity is a desired objective; it is one of the aims of Kuwaiti society. Prosperity does not, however, mean luxury, waste, boastfulness, or vainglory on this earth. Rather, prosperity means work, dignified life, and provision for the future, whereas luxury means squandering resources and wasting talent. Therefore the call for the rationalization of expenditures is addressed not only to the state's departments; it is addressed to every individual in our society. The proper method in this respect is drawn up for us by God Almighty when He says: Make not thy hand tied to thy neck nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach so that thou become blame worthy and destitute.

Brothers and sisters, the security of Kuwait and its people is our paramount priority. It is our present and future endeavor for which work has continuously been done at all levels and in all directions. We will not refrain from seeking any shield to protect ourselves against those who have ambitions. The shield of the unity of our ranks should be the task for us, the people of Kuwait. Therefore we should not leave a gap through which an enemy can infiltrate, without closing it. Harmony between our different strata, for us, the sons of Kuwait, should be brought about by us, the sons of Kuwait.

Nevertheless, we will not shy away from acquiring any force which would enable us to repulse aggression. But the source of our force should always be ourselves, we the

citizens of Kuwait. We will seek the support of anyone we can muster, but any support for any victory should start with us, we the defendants of Kuwait.

Alongside security we must continue the reconstruction, in which our economy is an essential part. Let us also remember that the invasion which God saved us from targeted both the souls and the land, that it was aimed at both the values and the institutions, and that it wanted to demolish the achievements before demolishing the buildings.

Had it not been for the strength of Kuwaiti souls, the depth of our people's values, and their determination to proceed with our achievements, the disaster would have been greater, the wound larger, and the destruction more devastating.

Now, with the testimony of reality and the recognition of the world, our people are firmly and knowingly heading toward reconstruction and the renewal of life. With planning, science, patience, and confidence we will speed up the process of investment and development.

At this stage there is a pressing need for the executive and legislative powers to play a role in dealing with many of our issues, be they social or economic. It is also necessary to take decisive action on these issues to avoid a repetition of unacceptable consequences in our society.

In spite of the current circumstances and the changing rhythm, our people, with God's support, will achieve the economic prosperity to which they aspire. We have to remove all the obstacles from our way. We must keep away from all false information and put hope before us as the goal we need and are eager to reach.

Within the framework of economic development, the most important aspect is human development. We are all keen to continue the exerted efforts for our dear country and to supply it with youthful hands and open minds by preparing the youth and involving them in the responsibility and the building of their country. Youth is the ever-rejuvenating current in Kuwait's river of life, and we must always support the tributaries of this river so that the source of power and rejuvenation for all sides of life throughout the country are never cut. Therefore, we will always support efforts aimed at preparing the young, developing them, and involving them in the revival of their country and its protection.

Brothers and sisters, the issue of the POW's and detainees will always be at the top of our priorities. It is an issue that concerns parts of our body. We ask God Almighty to help them to be calm and steadfast until they return safely, with God's will, to their homeland and families. We also ask God to bestow the highest degrees for our martyrs.

Kuwait will remain the objective and its word will always be the decisive word. Whoever works for it, sustains its rights, preserves its trust, and puts it before himself will surely have a high place with God. Whoever ignores its rights, works for other goals, is too selfish to put its interests before his own, or whose conscience has been corrupted and has then betrayed the trust of the people or followed his own inclinations and took her money without right, will be the subject of God's wrath.

As long as Kuwait stays in our trust, everything that is related to it is also a trust. Trust is one indivisible thing that shows in the young and the old, the small and the big; God does not love one given to perfidy and crime.

Brothers and sisters, God blessed us with victory and liberation; therefore we must thank Him day and night. The greatest thanks for God is to obey Him and avoid the things from which He ordered us to refrain. Accordingly, we have full confidence in the Higher Consultative Committee to continue the completion of its work for the implementation of the laws of the Islamic Shari'ah. We thank it for its continuous efforts and the intensive studies it has carried out and is carrying out as it benefits from all the experiences and experiments of other sister Islamic countries which share our goal.

As we receive the blessings of the last 10 days of Ramadan, we look forward to the future with hopeful hearts, trusting our God and confident in ourselves, supported by faith and not hampered by fear and apprehension. Let us walk together toward a bright future for this good country, believing in the safety of our road and the determination of our people. If anyone wants to see the goal, witness the destiny, and know the outcome, let him read in faith and meditate on this heavenly law: As for the righteous, they will be in bliss and the wicked, they will be in fire. From this source we take and by it we are satisfied. I wish you success. Glory for Kuwait. Praise and thanks to God Almighty at all times. Peace be to you.

Boycott Office Issues 'Black List' Decisions on Ships

LD1803045593 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 2120 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Kuwait, 17 Mar (KUNA)—The Office for the Boycott of Israel, which is part of Kuwait's General Customs Administration, today issued a decision to lift the ban on the Cypriot ship Sun Runner and not to include it on the black list following a pledge by the owners not to allow the ship to visit Israeli ports in the future. The office also issued a decision to include the Panamanian ship Hegg on the black list after the Arab boycott services were informed by an official Arab source that the ship had recently visited Israeli ports and had moored there.

Qatar

Diplomatic Relations Established With Republic of Georgia

JN1603131193 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1020 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Doha, 16 Mar (WAKH)—The State of Qatar and the Republic of Georgia have decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level as of today.

The Qatari News Agency reported that the two countries have issued a joint statement expressing confidence that exchanging ambassadors would promote world peace and cooperation.

Kurdistan Prime Minister Asks To Be Relieved of Post

NC1703170393 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The Kurdistan parliament held its ordinary session this morning, Wednesday. The prime minister and ministers of the Kurdistan region attended. At the beginning of the meeting, Kurdistan prime minister Dr. Fu'ad Ma'sum asked to be relieved of his post. The parliament's leadership promised to study his request and make the appropriate decision. The parliament then discussed the interior ministry's draft law.

Further on Resignation

NC1703184093 Paris AFP in English 1829 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Zakho, Iraq, March 17 (AFP) - The leader of an Iraqi Kurdish administration announced Wednesday he would step down, Kurdish sources said, as a UN winter relief programme neared an end.

Fu'ad Ma'sum stepped down as prime minister in Kurdish-held northern Iraq and handed in his government's resignation, Kurdish sources in Irbil said by telephone.

The administration was set up after Kurdish elections held last May in defiance of Baghdad. It has no international recognition.

The sources said the Kurdish parliament would debate the resignation and could appoint a new premier on Saturday. Ma'sum told parliament his cabinet had completed its mission, notably setting the economy back in motion. [passage omitted]

Kurdish Official Says Leadership 'To Embrace' Kurds

JN1803121193 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 93 pp 1, 2

[By 'Abdallah al-Lami]

[Excerpt] Baghdad—[passage omitted] In a statement to AL-JUMHURIYAH, Ahmad al-Atrushi, secretary general of the [pro-government] Kurdistan Democratic Party, said that this decisive stage requires all possible means to end criminal behaviour by agents in the region. He noted that the Revolution Command in struggling Iraq, headed by leader President Saddam Husayn, is on its way, God willing, to soon embrace its Kurdish people and save them from the dirty Zionist conspiracy they are facing at the hands of agents and hirelings. He said that our Kurdish people in great Iraq have suffered bitter expriences with British and U.S. colonialism. It is not logical for them now, after gaining their freedom and enjoying their full legitimate rights, to allow a handful of mercenaries—agents of colonialism and Zionism—to impose colonial control over them, loot their resources, and bring them to the state of misery and hardship from which they are currently suffering under covetous U.S., French, British, and Zionist forces. While they are actually enjoying their own rights, these forces are shedding crocodile tears over our Kurdish people's rights.

Al-Atrushi asked: If the Americans and their allies are true to their claims of defending human rights, and the Kurdish people in particular, then why do they not defend the Kurdish people in Turkey, Iran, and Syria who are being ruled by iron and fire and are deprived of their identity, nationalism, and language. He said that national duty makes it inevitable for all national Kurdish forces, which are concerned about the unity of the Iraqi people and their land as well as accomplishments and gains—achieved under the glorious 17-30 July revolution, led by struggling President Saddam Husayn—to unify their efforts to confront those agents and their masters to save the Kurdistan region and cleanse it from agents and hirelings. [passage omitted]

Saddam Calls On MIO Experts To Build 'New, Prosperous Iraq'

JN1703065793 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn has visited the Military Industrialization Organization [MIO] Headquarters and met with MIO Director Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid and a number of experts in the industry and industrialization fields.

During the meeting, his excellency stressed the importance of mobilizing potentials and efforts to achieve a comprehensive awakening in all sectors of society in order to achieve a prosperous life for our people. He also stressed the importance of creative interaction to achieve the big objectives of the victorious march of the mujahidin, who are contributing to the building of a new, prosperous Iraq through their effective role in various walks of life.

National Assembly Delegation Leaves for Italy

JN1703101293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—A National Assembly delegation led by 'Abd-al-Razzaq 'Abd-al-Qadir al-Janabi, secretary of the National Assembly, has left for Italy on a visit at the invitation of the Italian Parliament. In a statement to INA, al-Janabi said that the visit aims to develop parliamentary relations between the two countries to serve the interests of the two people. He added that the visit also aims to acquaint the Italian side with the destruction inflicted by the treacherous 30-state aggression on the industrial, economic, and service facilities as well as with the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the continued unjust economic blockade imposed on them.

Talabani, Barzani Cable UN Chief on 'Genocide'

NC1703203993 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, have sent a cable to UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali on the mass genocide in the village of 'Uwaynah, in which many residents were martyred or wounded. The cable says:

United Nations Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali:

We would like to draw your attention to the horrible crime perpetrated in the Kurdish village of 'Uwaynah on 12 March. Men, women, and children were martyred or wounded in the village, 15 miles west of Irbil. Armed men affiliated with the regime and belonging to the al-Hayb tribe attacked the village. A large number of them mounted two pick-up trucks and attacked the village, firing on citizens indiscriminately. The attackers were backed by Iraqi Government artillery deployed in camps around the village. Some 17 citizens, including five women and seven children, were martyred, and over 10 people, mostly children, were hurt. The attackers also looted villagers' money and property.

Iraqi soldiers in plain clothes reportedly took part in the operation, including an intelligence officer Lieutenant Jamal; villagers recognized him. Taha Muhammad Shahadah, chieftain of the al-Hayb tribe, is known to have close relations with Iraqi War Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid.

If anything, the incident indicates that the Iraqi Government is terrorizing Kurdish citizens and sowing the seeds of sedition between them and the Arabs in the region. The purpose is to force Kurdish residents to leave their villages following a government plan that has led to the expulsion of many Turkomens and Kurds from the city of Karkuk and other regions; they are now living as refugees in the Kurdish regions to the north.

We ask you to inform Security Council members about the incident, to work to stop Iraq's violations of Security Council Resolution 688, and to stand firm against the regime's criminal practices against the Kurdish people in Iraq's Kurdistan. With our greatest appreciation.

[Signed] Jalal Talabani, Mas'ud Barzani [date not given]

Factory Damaged by U.S. Missiles Officially Inaugurated

JN1703154293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1430 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 17 Mar (INA)—Staff Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil Hasan, adviser to the president of the Republic and supervisor of industry and oil, today inaugurated the project of pride, the al-Nida' State Enterprise for the Manufacturing of Molds, which was reconstructed by the military industrialization mujahidin personnel in the wake of the treacherous missile aggression against the buildings and workshops of the enterprise. The al-Nida' State Enterprise was targeted by over 35 U.S. long-range cruise missiles on 17 January 1993.

In an address, the director of the enterprise reviewed the treacherous missile aggression to which the buildings, workshops, and machinery of the enterprise were subjected, and the extraordinary reconstruction campaign that was completed by the military industrialization mujahidin in less than 45 days.

He said that the aggression was a big failure and did not achieve any of its evil objectives. He explained that a daily average of 3,000 engineers, technicians, and workers from various formations of the Military Industrialization Organization took part in this major reconstruction campaign to repair all damage that the plant sustained, which ranged from 80 to 100 percent. [passage omitted]

Arab League Informed of 13, 14 Mar Airspace Violations

JN1703101593 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (INA)—Iraq has informed the Arab League that U.S., British, and French aircraft, taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have continued to violate Iraqi airspace, thus posing serious threats to Iraq's security and sovereignty.

In a letter addressed to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab league said that these aircraft continued on 13 and 14 March to violate Iraqi airspace, carrying out 97 hostile sorties from these bases.

The Iraqi delegate attached to the letter a list detailing these violations, and requested that the letter be circulated among the Arab League member states to acquaint them of these regrettable incidents.

Prime Minister Receives Turkish Charge

JN1803123093 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1128 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi, Revolution Command Council member and prime minister, has received Sadi Calislar, the charge d'affaires of the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad. They discussed fields of cooperation between the two neighboring countries and means to improve them.

Further Reportage on Rabin's Visit to Washington

'Senior Source' on Peace Prospects

TA1703154493 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Report by Pe'erli Shahar in Washington]

[Text] We are closer to a peace accord than we were a week or two ago, a senior source in the prime minister's entourage said after the round of talks Prime Minister Rabin held in Washington with President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake.

It has been learned that agreements were reached in the talks between Rabin and the U.S. Administration, but are so far being kept secret. They will begin to be implemented in the coming days with the aim of bringing about the resumption of the peace process as quickly as possible. The senior source explained that the fact that we are now closer to an agreement than in the past derives from the fact that the new administration has managed to build working relations with Israel and the Arabs. The new administration has also managed to dispel the concern shown on both sides immediately after the results of the 4 November presidential election.

Israel wants to hear changes in Syria's public declarations on the peace process to be reassured about the honesty of Syria's intentions to reach true peace. Conversely, as soon as the Palestinians return to the negotiating table Jerusalem will also step up its public declarations about taking real steps in the territories on such issues as land or water, as well as self-rule on issues not discussed so far.

Rabin on Talks, Regional Security

TA1703182293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Report by Arye Golan in Washington]

[Text] Simultaneous negotiations with more than one Arab state have never succeeded in the past, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said in a briefing to U.S. journalists. He added that he does not know whether the Madrid process on which the peace talks are being conducted will succeed. We have to wait and see, he said. The problem is that the extremist Arab elements could cause the Arab states that want an accord not to come to the talks as happened over the deportees affair. The tail is wagging the dog instead of the dog wagging the tail, Mr. Rabin said. Later in the briefing, Mr. Rabin said he believes that the Palestinians will come to talks. He does not have any promise from the Palestinians. If they do promise something they will do it to the Americans, he added.

The following touch on some of the issues raised in the question-and-answer part of the briefing. Mr. Rabin said that 1993 and 1994 will be formative years for the future of the Middle East, when the direction of the peace process and the entire region will be decided. The Saudis, Rabin said, are afraid of aiding the peace process. They are holing up in their own country, afraid of sticking their noses out, and pay protection money to terrorism. Question: Why did you decide to deport the 400 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists although they are not terrorists? The prime minister admitted that they are not terrorists, but said that they organized and led the terror. Another question: Can the Egyptian Government cope with fundamentalist terror in its country? The prime minister said that he believes that President Mubarak can manage to stay in power since he knows what has to be done to keep the upper hand.

On the U.S. role in the negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, Mr. Rabin said the Americans agreed with us that while they should be a full partner, they will not come up with compromises or proposals, but remain an intermediary, and will not sit around the negotiating table.

The prime minister said that for elections in the territories to take place, the mentality of the inhabitants there has to change before they can accept a democratic process. Election results there depend on those who count the votes, he said. He also said we need three to six months before we can know where the negotiations are going.

On Iran, Mr. Rabin said that it has developed megalomaniac ambitions, which are a combination of imperialist aspirations and a desire to introduce a fundamentalist way of life throughout the world. In Mr. Rabin's view, Iran will have nonconventional arms, including nuclear weapons, within seven to fifteen years, and the world has to stop that danger. The U.S. Administration views things in a similar although not identical light with Israel. Rabin said the closer we get to the peace process, the groups operating under Iran's inspiration become more active. This was the prime minister's last day in Washington. He is now holding his last meetings in Congress and leaves in several hours for New York where he will spend another 24 hours before flying home.

Rabin on Access to U.S. Defense Systems

TA1703155793 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 p 1

[Report by Amir Oren in Washington]

[Text] In their security discussions here this week with the heads of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the National Security Council, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and his aides called for free access to the following: early warning and fire control systems for defense against ballistic missiles, data gathered by U.S. spy satellites, American industries interested to purchasing Isreali components used to launch civilian satellites. Rabin also called on the Pentagon to expand and deepen Haifa port enabling U.S. aircraft carriers to anchor there and permit millions of dollars to flow into the local economy. Rabin also stressed that at a time when bases in the United States

and around the world are being shut down, he is not suggesting that Haifa become a home port for the 6th Fleet.

Rabin, accompanied by Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, Military Attache Giyora Rom, Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri and Quti Mor, 'Ivri's assistant for foreign affairs, discussed these and other matters with Defense Secretary Les Aspin, his deputy Dr. William Perry, and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Rabin hosted CIA Director James Woolsey in his hotel room and surveyed the threats Israel is facing. He also brought up the threats to the moderate regimes in Jordan and Egypt, but did not say specifically that the two might rejoin an Arab or Muslim front against Israel.

Israel wants permission to receive from the U.S. defense and intelligence establishment direct, real-time data from American spy satellites. This is contrary to the current policy which gives Israel limited access to such data and only in times of emergency, such as the Iraqi missile attack during the Gulf war.

Israel is also interested in sophisticated software for U.S. equipment it already has and technological and financial compensation for the erosion in the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] qualitative edge over the Arab armies, which are being armed with upgraded weapons systems similar to those in Israel. Despite the mutual commitment to continue developing the Arrow missile, that will include Israeli early warning and control systems, Israel now also wants access to American systems being developed simultaneously for the rival U.S. THAD missile, since it will be a complex task if they are to be integrated into the Arrow project. The two defense establishments also discussed a different concept of intercepting ballistic missiles already in the accelerating stage before they reach the atmosphere and come dangerously close to their targets.

Palestinians View Clinton's Support to Israel

TA1703162993 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 p A2

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[Text] "We did not have many expectations of the Rabin-Clinton meeting," Palestinian Delegation Spokesperson Hanan 'Ashrawi said yesterday. "We knew that Rabin's goals in his U.S. visit and the meeting with President Clinton focused mainly on improving the U.S.- Israeli relations, and not promoting the peace process. According to the reports, the two did not discuss the obstacles to resuming the peace process or the reasons we rejected the letter of invitation. They only dealt with tightening bilateral relations between the countries."

'Ashrawi noted that the Palestinian readiness to resume the negotiations has not changed in the wake of the Rabin-Clinton meeting. According to her, the Palestinians are still awaiting the U.S. responses to the "six points," broached with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his visit in Jerusalem. She added that the delegates have so far not met with representatives from the U.S. Jerusalem Consulate.

The Palestinians are also expecting a U.S. clarification on its role in the negotiations, which was coined "a full partner" by Christopher during his discussions with the Palestinians in Jerusalem, and which the Palestinians regarded as an achievement on their part. 'Ashrawi believes that in this role, the United States should be neutral, and that it should attend tripartite negotiating sessions to create a balance for the unequal relations of the occupier and the oppressed. She said Israel exploits this relationship at every opportunity to force its stands.

The Palestinian delegation spokesman made it clear that the deportee issue should still be resolved, in principle and in practice. She added that it should be connected to human rights in the territories, and with other issues essential to negotiations, such as an Israeli recognition of UN Resolution 242 as the source of authority in the negotiations on the interim agreement. At the same time, 'Ashrawi said she has reasons to be optimistic because of recently published Israeli statements which termed Resolution 242 as the basis for the peace negotiations.

"The problem," 'Ashrawi said, "is the way the issues are addressed. Israel and the United States believe that they can forge a bilateral agreement on resuming negotiations without sharing it with the Palestinians, or taking their stand into consideration."

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio at 1500 GMT on 17 March carries a report by Arab affairs correspondent Eldad Beck, adding: "The pro-Israeli spirit of the public statements President Clinton made after his meeting with Prime Minister Rabin made the Palestinian leadership very concerned. The Palestinians believe that Rabin's visit to the United States has marked a new record in U.S. support for Israel's stands on the peace process. They said that Clinton is repeating assertions the Americans used to make during the Cold War. The U.S. President presents Israel as a strategic ally and pledges not to cut financial aid to Israel, despite the difficulties of the U.S. economy, while adopting Israel's views on the peace process.

["The Palestinians cite as an example Clinton's request of Syria to make gestures to prove its willingness to establish true peace with Israel. This request backs Israel's demand that the Syrians reveal more about the nature of peace, before withdrawal is discussed. The Palestinian issue, they claim, was only secondary on the prime minister's agenda of discussions with the heads of the U.S. Administration, which again matched Israeli concepts.

["The Palestinians warn that these facts make the U.S. ability to act as a mediator between Israel and the Arabs questionable. The Palestinians expect to meet Warren

Christopher next week in Washington to dispel this doubt. Spokesman Hanan 'Ashrawi confirmed that efforts are being made to arrange such a meeting, but she claims that the Americans must first prove their willingness to discuss the obstacles which prevent progress in the peace talks."]

Rabin Asks To Meet al-Asad

TA1803094993

[Editorial Report] Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 18 March carries a recorded report by Natan Gutman from the United States, saying that "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin asked U.S. congressmen to make inquiries in Syria on whether President al-Asad would be willing to meet with him." Gutman notes that congressmen who met with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin on Washington's Capitol Hill "told him they plan to leave for Syria within a few weeks to hold talks. What would you like us to ask President al-Asad? the congressmen asked Rabin. The prime minister replied: Ask him if he is willing to make full peace with Israel, including normalization and open borders. Mr. Rabin added a new twist by saying: Ask al-Asad if he would be willing to meet with Israeli leaders in order to make peace."

Replying to another question, the prime minister said: "I am willing to meet with al-Asad or any other Syrian official in order to secure peace." Gutman notes that "although Prime Minister Rabin has expressed his readiness to meet with the Syrian president in the past, this was his most explicit declaration yet—almost an appeal by Rabin to al-Asad to meet with him in order to talk peace."

Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 18 March in a page 1 report by Drora Perl from Washington quotes Rabin as saying: "I do not believe that President al-Asad has laid all his cards on the table yet, and I have to convince the Israeli public that he really wants peace."

Continuing his report on IDF Radio, Gutman goes on to point out that "while the prime minister was working hard on the Syrian track, a gloomy picture began to emerge with regard to the Palestinians. In the talks the prime minister and his aides held in Washington with U.S. Administration officials who deal with the peace process, the Americans expressed great pessimism regarding the chances of the Palestinian delegation attending the forthcoming round of talks. The U.S. officials said they felt that the issuing of the invitations to the next round of talks had failed to deliver the desired results and had not forced the Palestinians to make a decision. The Americans added that the more time passed, the greater their pessimism regarding the Israeli-Palestinian track. The senior members of the Israeli delegations to the peace talks—Elyaqim Rubinstein, Itamar Rabinovich, and Eytan Ben-Tzur—held talks at the State Department yesterday as part of the preparatory meetings scheduled by the Americans prior to the upcoming round of talks. The U.S. officials said they wished to be updated on the positions Israel will present at the next round of talks, noting that they will invite the Palestinians for a similar discussion next week."

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 18 March in a page 10 report from Washington by Ron Ben-Yishay notes that "a senior source in the prime minister's entourage told YEDI'OT AHARONOT yesterday that Israel and the United States have agreed to continue the peace process on the basis of the Madrid formula for the next several months; however, if no breakthrough is reached on either the Syrian or Palestinian tracks within three to six months, the United States and Israel will search for alternative ways to promote the process." The report adds that "the senior source in the prime minister's entourage explained that if the negotiations in their present framework fail to achieve results, the United States and Israel will examine alternative options, including: unilateral Israeli steps toward Palestinian self-government in the territories, elections in the territories, or separate negotiations with Syria."

Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 18 March in a page A3 report from the United States by Ori Nir adds that speaking to U.S. columnists and commentators yesterday, "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said that he knows that Iran recently purchased long-range Scud-C ballistic missiles manufactured in North Korea. These missiles can hit Israel if launched from Iran. This is the first time a senior Israeli official has publicly confirmed reports that recently appeared in the American press about Iran having purchased the missiles from North Korea."

HA'ARETZ adds that while commenting on extremist elements such as Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Prime Minister Rabin also asserted that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat "is only interested in foiling the process now under way which calls for the implementation of the autonomy plan in the territories. Rabin said he believes 'Arafat would lose his standing as the Palestinian leader if autonomy in the territories were realized, and 'Arafat knows it."

'Unwritten Understanding' Said Reached With Syria

TA1803100393 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 18 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Report by Pinhas 'Inbari and U.S. correspondent Pe'erli Shahar]

[Excerpt] Israel and Syria have reached an unwritten understanding about the framework of an arrangement, which must now be filled in with details. Foreign diplomatic sources in Israel conversant with the political process told our correspondent that Israel and Syria have agreed to issue a joint declaration in the spirit of full withdrawal in exchange for full peace but have not formulated its exact wording. The declaration would be implemented gradually, and Syria would reward each phase of the Israeli withdrawal with an element of peace.

Syria would state its willingness for full relations with Israel immediately upon the announcement of the agreement, but would complete its implementation at the end of the withdrawal process. These verbal understandings have not yet been put in writing, and discussions must now be held about the extent of each withdrawal phase and its peace equivalent. No agreement has yet been reached on the duration of the withdrawal or of the implementation of peace. It has been learned that Syria is prepared to accept Israel's concept of the security problems and is willing to agree to a demilitarization of the Golan Heights and to hand over control of key strategic points to UN troops.

The sources said Israel made it clear to Syria that, at this point, it cannot recognize Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights because the Golan Law is still in effect and Israeli governments cannot ignore laws passed by the Knesset. Syria apparently accepted this argument, but it expects the Golan Law to be abolished at the end of the process or during one of its phases.

These understandings were not formulated in the Rabin-Clinton talks but in unofficial contacts Israel held with Syrian elements during the recess in the peace talks.

Referring to the problem of the deportees, the diplomatic sources said they are confident that by the time the talks resume in Washington, a formula combining the Israeli and U.S. pronouncements will be found that will reconcile the Palestinians. The sources noted that Israel is not prepared to make an announcement in principle not to use deportations in the future, but only that it is a measure to be used under special conditions. The Palestinians do not accept this formula and say that President Clinton should publicly announce the U.S. position against deportations. [passage omitted covered in referent item]

[In an insert story in the same pages, Pe'erli Shahar reports that when asked whether any decisions described as secret had been made, Shim'on Sheves, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, said: "Whatever has been published has been published, and what has not been published probably should not have been published."]

Military Attaches To Be Exchanged With PRC

TA1703152293 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[Text] HA'ARETZ has learned that, for the first time in its history, Israel is about to open a military attache's office in China, and the PRC will open one in Israel at the same time. The offices will be opened this summer.

Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, the chief of staff, will decide on the rank of Israel's military attache in the PRC. The rank of the military attache varies from brigadier general to lieutenant colonel, depending on the importance of the mission. Reliable sources have said that the exchange of military attaches will have a significant influence on the PRC-Israel defense relations. The decision to open the attache's office follows the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, and the secret three-day visit of former Defense Minister Moshe Arens in the PRC the same year, which leaked to the press several days after being held. During his visit, Arens conferred with the heads of the PRC administration and senior defense officials, with whom he discussed expanding the ties between the two countries.

Israel has recently appointed a military attache in Russia. It also has a military attache's office in India, but it is headed by a Defense Ministry representative and not an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officer. Strategic ties between Israel and the PRC have accelerated over the past two years. According to foreign media reports, Israel sells the PRC arms and technology worth millions of dollars, and advises on security issues. Israel has never admitted that it is selling arms and technology to the PRC.

The chief of staff has recently approved the appointment of several IDF officers to military attaches. One of the candidates to be appointed an attache is Brigadier General 'Azri'el Nevo, the prime minister's military secretary, due to resign soon.

Peres Adviser: Reports of Tension with Rabin 'Rubbish'

TA1703131193 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 17 Mar 93 p 1

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[Text] The Foreign Minister's Office last night firmly rejected reports and rumors, originating in Washington, of a purported sense of anger among members of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's entourage over Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' actions during Rabin's absence. Behira Bardugo, the foreign minister's media adviser, dismissed the reports as "complete rubbish."

Foreign Ministry sources said that yesterday they had been told by officials at the Israeli Embassy in Washington and journalists accompanying the prime minister on his trip that members of Rabin's entourage had expressed fears that Peres had been engaged in political manipulations designed to undermine Rabin's standing in his absence and "had adopted too high a profile" in his handling of internal security affairs, including holding unnecessary but highly publicized meetings with security elements, such as yesterday's discussions between Peres and top police and defense establishment officials.

The officials also noted that the main reason behind Rabin's return to Israel was not the deterioration of the security situation, but rather the SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] faction's eroding commitment to stay in the coalition. Sources close to Rabin linked the SHAS threats to leave the coalition to their reproaches against Peres. The sources claimed that Peres had not done enough to postpone the vote on lifting SHAS

Knesset Member [MK] Refa'el Pinhasi's parliamentary immunity and had thus undermined the stability of the coalition.

Peres' media adviser Behira Bardugo said in reaction: "We do not believe that these statements were made by the prime minister. Bardugo noted that Ministers Peres and Rabin had been in constant contact over the past month. She asserted that Peres had in no way been involved with revoking MK Pinhasi's immunity.

Sources in the Foreign Minister's Office said that Peres has decided not to chair a cabinet session today, so as not to add what they called "fuel to the flames." The sources added that Peres' meeting yesterday with the representatives of the security forces was initiated by the latter and not by the foreign minister.

Dozens Reported Injured in Khan Yunus Clashes 18 Mar

TA1803113693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Excerpt] There were more clashes in Khan Yunus in the Gaza Strip this morning. Palestinian sources say dozens of protesters were wounded by Army fire.

On the road passing Gaza city, a reserve soldier was lightly wounded by a bullet fired by a fellow soldier. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says the two were attacked by stones, and the soldier was wounded when his friend opened fire at the assailants.

Jewish settlers and representatives from the Victims of Arab Terror group this morning began an indefinite vigil outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. The protesters brought with them a large placard listing the numbers of Israelis dead and wounded from intifadah violence: 161 dead and 7,034 wounded, according to the organizers. A memorial flame was lit in front of a list of names of the Israelis killed in intifadah incidents. [passage omitted]

Knesset Lifts MK's Immunity; No Coalition Crisis Expected

TA1703183993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The Knesset voted to lift parliamentary immunity from SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Deputy Minister Refa'el Pinhasi as requested by the attorney general. In a secret vote, 58 Knesset members [MK's] voted in favor of lifting immunity, 41 voted against, and eight abstained. Deputy Minister Pinhasi said after the vote that although the move was expected, he was still surprised by the outcome. He blamed MK's from the right wing of supporting the lifting of his immunity because of a political settling of accounts. He believes there is no reason for a coalition crisis.

SHAS Secretary General Shlomo Benizri also believes that there will not be a coalition crisis. He reported to Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef on the vote and the rabbi did not express surprise.

Some 100 people are now demonstrating outside Minister Arye Der'i's home Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood calling on SHAS to bolt the government. Our correspondent Moshe Nussbaum reports that the demonstrators tried to reach the minister's front door, but were pushed back by the police.

Foreign Minister Comments on Clinton-Rabin Talks

JN1803081393 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18-19 Mar 93 pp 1, 5

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—Jordan said Wednesday it was too early to try to assess the impact of talks between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin on the Middle East peace process.

Syria and the Palestinians criticised Monday's Washington meeting for ignoring Israel's expulsion of Palestinians, the main issue threatening to block the peace process.

"I think it is too early to give a proper and good assessment," Foreign MInister Kamil Abu-Jabir told Reuters. "We will have to wait and see how Israel would behave in view of the results of this meeting before we can make any proper response."

Mr. Clinton said after the talks he did not raise the issue of the Palestinian expellees with Mr. Rabin, Arabs had called for a solution to the problem to facilitate their return to the peace talks, due to resume in Washington on April 20.

Dr. Abu-Jabir said Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians would decide whether or not to attend the peace talks after a coordination meeting in Damascus on March 28.

"The whole situation has not taken shape yet. We must remember that we have little over a 30 days for the resumption of negotiations in Washington so there is still some time to see how things will unfold between now and then."

Jordanian newspapers Wednesday condemned Mr. Clinton's comments which they said weakened a U.S. pledge to take an active role in the peace process.

Syria criticised Mr. Clinton Wednesday saying his pledge of continued full support to Israel following talks with Mr. Rabin had added a new obstacle to Middle East peace.

The official daily al-Ba'th, organ of the ruling Ba'th Party, said Mr. Clinton should have pressed Israel to accept U.N. resolutions and allow the return of the Palestinian exiles whose expulsion in December had stalled the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

"Clinton's statements came to add a new obstacle in the face of peace and not the contrary as it was supposed," it said.

"The least that could be said about them (statements) is that they came to help Israel undermine any hope for a just solution to the problems of the region."

Syrian officials and the state-run press had welcomed President Clinton's pledge, conveyed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his visit to Damascus last month, to play the role of a full partner in the peace talks.

But al-Ba'th expressed disappointment and described the U.S. president's pledges of continued support to Israel as depriving Washington from playing the role of an honest broker.

"Instead of pressing Israel to respond to the international legitimacy regarding the deportees and the implementation of U.N. resolutions... he (Clinton) clearly announced the renewal of the U.S.-Israeli partner bond," al-Ba'th said.

Palestinians are worried a pro-Israel tilt by the Clinton administration could jeopardise the U.S. role as a fair mediator in the peace talks, a spokeswoman said Wednesday.

Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian peace negotiators, expressed the fear.

"We don't want this to be translated into a bias for Israel in the negotiations," Dr. 'Ashrawi told the Associated Press.

Noting the expellees' issue was not raised in the Clinton-Rabin talks, Dr. 'Ashrawi said the meeting was "perceived by Palestinians as more of an attempt to elevate Israeli-American ties than to deal with the issues of the peace process."

She confirmed a report in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that Mr. Christopher may invite Palestinian delegates for an informal discussion about the peace talks in Washington next week.

Dr. 'Ashrawi added: "Nothing is final or decided yet."

She said the Palestinians would go "if the discussions would be about overcoming obstacles and putting negotiations back on track."

Palestinian newspapers also expressed concern about Mr. Clinton's warm meeting with Mr. Rabin. A cartoon in the al-Fajr daily showed the two leaders at a table with a Palestinian uprising activist looking on angrily and saying: "I see the loving couple is in real harmony here."

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasir 'Arafat conferred twice during Tuesday night with King Hassan of Morocco and his top advisers, the official news agency MAP reported.

The first meeting at the royal guest house was attended by Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali and the king's senior political advisers Ahmed Reda Guedira and Ahmed Bensouda.

At the second meeting in the royal palace they were joined by Prime Minister Mohamed Karim Lamrani.

The agency gave no details of the talks.

Mr. 'Arafat was accompanied by Faysal al-Husayni, leader of the Palestinian negotiating team at the Middle East talks, Mahmud 'Abbas, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, and Hakam Bal'wai of the Fatah movement's Central Committee.

Peres Criticized; Peace Requirements Emphasized

JN1803100593 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Mar 93 pp 1, 21

[Editorial: "Peres and His Concept of Peace"]

[Text] Addressing the Knesset, Peres yesterday talked about the characteristics of the peace sought by Israel. He clearly focused on peace with Syria and the duties that should be shouldered by the Syrians. This is not new for Israeli officials. They have been repeating it for a while as if a separate settlement with Syria will become possible. Needless to say, this propagandist policy is aimed at casting doubts among the Arab parties taking part in the peace negotiations. Moreover, this evil policy will not succeed because there is a unanimous Arab agreement to reject any separate or partial solutions and that there is no alternative to a just and comprehensive settlement that would achieve real peace in the region.

The requirements of peace are more comprehensive than being confined to duties shouldered by this or that Arab party. They should necessarily include Israel's acceptance to withdraw from all the Arab territories it occupied in 1976 and afterwards in implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338 and the land-for-peace principle. These requirements should also include Israel's recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination on their land.

Peres complained about the billions of dollars being wasted on armaments in the region. He forgot that the Israeli aggression on the Arabs, the Israeli rejection of international resolutions and legitimacy, and the serious threats posed by the Israeli arsenal of traditional and non-traditional weapons are factors which led to armament in the region. This is a fact that Israeli officials are trying to ignore and obliterate. Peres and other decision-makers in Israel can talk about the characteristics of peace as they please. However, these characteristics will not change any of the basic peace requirements and will not make any Arab party ignore them.

Palestinians in Amman Said at Risk; Background Viewed

PM1803114793 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p1

[Wafa' 'Amr report: "After the Announcement of the Ban on the Travel of U.S. Tourists to the Kingdom, a Warning to the Palestinian Leaders in Jordan Against Possible Israeli Attempts To Assassinate Them"]

[Text] Amman—An informed Palestinian source stated yesterday that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has sent messages to Palestinian Ambassador in Jordan al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim and the Palestinian leaders in Jordan telling them to be careful and vigilant because of possible threat to their lives in the Jordanian capital.

The Palestinian source, who declined to reveal his name, said that President 'Arafat alerted the Palestinian leaders in Jordan and asked them to take security measures to protect themselves and the members of the Palestinian negotiating delegation when they visit Jordan, because he has received information that their lives may be threatened. The Palestinian source did not disclose the source of the threats or how and when they were received.

Recently there has been a noticeable and mounting media campaign to discredit the Palestinian ambassador in Jordan, especially in Israel. Palestinian officials believe that the threat could affect any Palestinian leader in Jordan, particularly as a number of Palestinian officials who supervise the intifadah live in Amman or visit it from time to time. There has been a violent escalation of the intifadah unprecedented since it started. That has put pressure on Israel.

The threats coincide with the U.S. warning to American tourists not to visit Jordan for their own safety. The United States did not explain why that warning was issued. This infuriated Jordan because it was not consulted before that decision was made.

A Jordanian official has confirmed that the Jordanian security authorities foiled a plan by a fundamentalist group which arrived in Jordan from a neighboring Arab state to attack a U.S. tourist bus in Jordan. The official refused to give the name of that Arab state, but he said that Jordan has contacted it on this case. The Jordanian Government also informed the United States of the plan to attack a U.S. tourist bus in Jordan and that was the end of the matter, which was resolved one month before the sudden U.S. ban on the travel of U.S. tourists to Jordan.

Jordanian sources said that they were surprised by the U.S. decision and that, on contacting the U.S. embassy in Amman, U.S. Ambassador Roger Harrison told them he himself was not notified or consulted before his country made that sudden decision.

Some Jordanian sources speak of involvement of Islamic groups living in Syria and linked to Iran in the plot to attack Americans in Jordan. Some Jordanian and Palestinian figures have linked this incident to the threats received by the Palestinians, and they expressed the view that some hostile circles want to create problems and confusion in Jordan to put pressure on it or undermine the existing Arab coordination among the Arab parties to the peace process.

Premier Discusses, House Approves Report on Arms Control

JN1703203493 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The House of Representatives today held a session under Speaker Dr. 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat with His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir in attendance. Various topics on the agenda were discussed.

Today's session discussed topics on the House's agenda slated for Monday [15 March], when the House did not convene for lack of quorum. [passage omitted]

Regarding committee decisions, the House discussed a report from its administrative committee containing Proposal No. 17 on the gathering of arms from citizens. The committee's report was read out during this session. It contained the committee's viewpoint on the government's justifications for such instructions. The report pointed to the meetings which the committee held with the government for this purpose. It explained that several positive points were agreed during the discussions that were held. [passage omitted]

His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir commented on the opinions and proposals made. He said:

[Begin recording] I would like to make some remarks on the discussion held. I may be one of those in this hall who is entitled to talk about arms and their use. I have dedicated my life to the Armed Forces. I have used firearms and trained others in their use. I would like to say with much vehemence and conviction that arms in the hands of untrained people, be they men or women, are harmful and not useful. The Armed Forces have been present on the cease-fire line since 1967. They were also on the front line in the West Bank in 1948. As His Eminence [House member] Shaykh Abu-Zant said, we are now standing strongly, courageously, and faithfully on the east bank of the [Jordan] river. Commenting on a remark by one of the brothers, [I say] the Armed Forces have an intensive presence everywhere in this Kingdom, both close to the cities and outside them. I am of the view that the administrative committee's report was in the country's best interest and in the homeland's service. I support what the committee has mentioned and recommended as a result of its agreement with the government. There are other things, which I will not discuss but which I have mentioned to the brother chairman and members of the committee, regarding my personal experience with the availability of arms. Such arms were not useful because they were in the hands of people who did not receive sound training. Therefore, I request the brothers support the administrative committee's report. Thank you. [end recording]

Afterward, the House approved the administrative committee's with a majority vote. [passage omitted]

Al-Hirawi Says Syrian Army Still Needed

NC1703133893 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In an interview with Radio Canada International, President Ilyas al-Hirawi expressed the hope that the peace process will be culminated in a process of construction and development so that Lebanon will regain not only its pre-1975 status, but also reach what it must be in the year 2000.

The president emphasized that the Lebanese with their good intentions and strong roots in the country were the main tool for returning Lebanon to its present status and starting the peace and reconstruction process.

To a question about ties with Syria, President al-Hirawi said: We must understand that these ties must be strengthened and must have strong bases. But when the tendentious war broke out in Lebanon—the war of others on our land—Syria provided us with great help. This help was not given for the sake of the Christians only, but for the Lebanese.

To another question about reports being repeated at international and Arab seminars that Lebanon has become a Syrian protectorate, al- Hirawi rejected the idea. Had the reports been true, we would not have signed a treaty between the two countries which we called the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination. God forbid that we are a protectorate to Syria. He added: When our military and security forces reach full strength, like the other independent countries, we can say that we can depend on ourselves. Only then will we thank the Syrian forces for the role they have played and we will address a greeting to President Hafiz al-Asad for his role and tell him to withdraw his Army from Lebanon.

In his interview with Radio Canada International, President al-Hirawi said: As for the question why the Syrian Army is not redeployed at present, we hope that those asking this question will tell the Lebanese and the Lebanese authorities what they have done to help our Army so far. They did not send a single truck, rifle, or bullet. He said that what remains of the Army is now in the south to ensure security should peace prevail. But as for the other areas, we have our excuse because we have no forces.

Shammas Resigns; To Continue Talks Role

NC1703195093 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Statement by Information Minister Michel Samahah following a Cabinet meeting in Beirut today—recorded]

[Excerpts] At Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's invitation, the Cabinet held its weekly meeting this morning. President Ilyas al-Hirawi presided. The session began with President al-Hirawi noting that it was the last in the blessed month of Ramadan. He expressed his best wishes to Cabinet members and to the Lebanese people, wishing them greater security and accord as well as progress in the march toward reconstruction, development, and the liberation of areas in the south and western al-Biqa' so that our people there could enjoy their dignity. [passage omitted]

The Cabinet accepted Ambassador Suhayl Shammas' resignation from public service in the Foreign Ministry's General Secretariat, the Lebanese Embassy in Germany, and the diplomatic corps. The Cabinet entrusted him to continue leading the Lebanese delegation to the bilateral peace talks in Washington. [passage omitted]

Phalangist Delegation Returns From Damascus

NC1703193193 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The Phalangist Party delegation returned to Beirut this afternoon from Damascus, where members met Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. The delegation met Party leader Dr. George Sa'adah at the Phalangist Party headquarters at 1700 in the presence of Phalangist Party Secretary General Attorney Karim Paqraduni. The meeting reviewed the visit to Damascus.

Delegation sources told the Voice of Lebanon that the meeting provided an opportunity for a comprehensive review of Lebanese-Syrian relations and the Phalangist Party role within that framework. It dealt with solidarity between the two countries on confronting current challenges, primarily the peace negotiations and their effect on regional peace whether they succeed or fail, and discussed Lebanese unity and internal balances.

The sources said they were satisfied with the visit and that Khaddam showed complete understanding of the Lebanese situation as the Phalangists explained it. The parties agreed to continue consultations and dialogue on all main issues. They also touched on the kidnapping of Phalangist Party Political Bureau member Butrus Khawand. The delegation asked Khaddam to try to determine his whereabouts. Khaddam said Syria is interested in this issue and is making the necessary contacts to find out where he is. The sources denied that the discussions touched on differences within the Phalangist Party, because this file was closed by the Lebanese authorities, which decided to hand over the centers to the legitimate Phalangist Party leadership.

Fadlallah on NY Blast, Talks, Other Issues

NC1703200993 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic 16 Mar 93 p 4

[Text] 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has ruled out Islamic fundamentalists playing any part in bombing New York's World Trade Center and said Israel was responsible. He said the bombing does not serve any of the fundamentalists' goals and leads only to

restrictions on their freedom. He said Israel is the only party to benefit from the bombing and is the side more likely to be behind it.

Fadlallah told REUTER that the bombing is an Israeli, not an Islamic, issue, for the very simple reason that the fundamentalists benefit nothing from it, because those of them who live in the United States live in freedom. They face no problems there. The United States, which fights freedom among the Third World peoples through the regimes linked with it, grants freedom to individuals who emigrate there. He said Islamic fundamentalists who live in the United States in particular have no interest in bombing the World Trade Center.

Fadlallah said that Israel would seem to be the only party to profit from the act, because it wants to prove it is the only power capable of protecting the Americans from Muslims and wants to divert world attention from the crisis of the deportees it expelled to south Lebanon.

Fadlallah said: This issue prompts us to believe that the U.S. Administration should pursue this probability, because it may find that Jewish circles in the United States are the main criminal. He said: If we want to find the criminal we must find who benefits from the issue. He said President Bill Clinton seems to be closer to Israel than George Bush—to the point where he is not qualified to sponsor the Middle East peace talks.

Fadlallah pointed out that the Arab world has become weak and divided since the alliance led by the United States fought to expel the Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. He said Washington is pushing the Arab parties to resume the peace talks suspended since Israel deported 415 Palestinians in December.

Fadlallah said that anyone opposing the peace talks is treated in the same way as the deportees in south Lebanon, adding that the future of Israeli-occupied south Lebanon is linked with the negotiations. He said the fundamentalists do not agree with the peace talks, but act to pressure those taking part in the negotiations so that they might solve their issue without making concessions. He said the ball is in the court of those who say the negotiations are the path to freedom and peace.

Amal, Hizballah Agree To Stop Shelling in South

PM1703142293 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Agreement To Support Suburb Measures and Stop Firing Rockets in South"]

[Text] Beirut, AL-HAYAH—The Amal Movement and Hizballah have agreed to support the measures currently being implemented by Lebanese Army units in the southern suburb [of Beirut]. They also stressed that the "troublemakers" be denied political cover, because of their desire to surmount the problem which arose last week.

AL-HAYAH has learned that the Amal Movement and Hizballah have agreed to continue to fight the Israeli occupation but without firing rockets in reply to Israeli attacks, and to avoid shelling from the villages.

The Amal and Hizballah leaderships met the evening before last in the presence of Chamber of Deputies Speaker Attorney Nabih Birri and Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah. The meeting, which was held in Birri's house, included a breakfast banquet which was attended from Amal by Deputy Ayyub Humayd, chairman of the Executive Committee Haytham Jum'ah, 'Ali Kharis, Jamil Halik, 'Ali al-Khalil, Muhammad Nasrallah, and Ahmad Ba'labakki; and from Hizballah by Deputy 'Ali 'Ammar, Political Bureau head Husayn al-Khalil, Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din, 'Abd-al-Hadi Hammadi, Wafiq Safa, and Khalil Harb. It was agreed to "reactivate coordination between the two sides, especially in the south, and to take account of the requirements of securing the kinfolk's steadfastness and intercepting any attempt designed to depopulate the villages."

On the meeting Nasrallah said: "The resistance option was stressed as an option for liberation, and ways of bolstering this option were discussed. The meeting also stressed cooperation and coordination vis-a-vis fighting the Israeli enemy, whether through the operations carried out by either party or through coordination within the joint operations room."

Regarding the problems which occurred between Amal and Hizballah in the suburb, Nasrallah said: "We broached that issue in detail and it was stressed that what happened was merely an individual incident which could occur anywhere in Lebanon or the world. We are amazed how the matter was blown out of proportion by the media. Perhaps there are quarters which tried to exploit this issue." He pointed out that the relationship between Amal and Hizballah is "in its best condition with regard to cooperation, coordination, and understanding."

Israeli Raid Near Border Reported 17 Mar

NC1803093093 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Reports from the south say Israeli warplanes flew at low altitude yesterday over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah. This was accompanied by artillery shelling targeting the al-Litani River basin and the town of Shaqra and its environs.

At 0900 yesterday morning, enemy planes raided Wadi al-Saluqi, which is next to the border strip. The raid injured two citizens, who were transferred to Jabal 'Amil Hospital for treatment.

Al-Asad on World Issues, National Unity, Peace

JN1803073193 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad delivered a speech during the iftar banquet he hosted yesterday in honor of scholars and men of religion on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan. The president's speech, which came in response to the speeches delivered by the scholars and minister of awqaf, dealt with current issues.

At the beginning of his speech, President al-Asad expressed his pleasure upon meeting scholars during the blessed month of Ramadan every year to exchange concerns and interests, to work together in order to study these concerns, and to tackle them as this is the best way to determine these concerns and resolve them.

The president thanked the scholars who delivered speeches to convey their feelings and those of their brothers who did not have the opportunity to speak. He thanked the scholars for raising many issues, ideas, and concerns which could be dealt with although there was not time to deal with all of them.

The president touched on the situation in the world by saying that the world is rolling and changing. He added: We are a part of this world and our principles, values, concepts, and ideals are being exposed to strong jolts. We in Syria should realize this and shoulder our responsibilities in order to become more confident in our present and future and more reassured about our future and that of our sons, grandsons, and next generations.

The president said: The developments in the world make it more difficult for us and for third world countries. The stage, through which the world is passing today, might be long or short. In light of this international situation, we must think for a long time and struggle for a long time so that we will not miss the road and so that we will remain determined and confident in our strength and in the capability of our people to face challenges, relying in this on our people, on our Arab nation, on Muslims throughout the world, and on free men in every country.

The president added: We in this country are used to facing challenges. Syria has faced challenges for many years. Even when it was weak, and when it became weak because of its role in the history of the Arabs and Muslims, Syria remained defiant. When we were invaded by the superpowers we were defiant. Our defiance took various forms, but we did not capitulate or yield. Things then developed for the better, and over the past few years we exercised our free will and expressed ourselves and faced the challenges without fear and without being reckless or afraid. We expressed ourselves in words and in all the other means dictated by events. God has always blessed us with success, and we hope He will grant us success in the present and future.

The president spoke about national unity and said: National unity in our county is the central, indispensable pillar of this country's steadfastness. It has always been our objective and must remain so at all times. It is the right path and an effective weapon to realize the major goals we seek to achieve; and is linked to our moral and material conditions and to our values, glories, and faith. Together, we can crush difficulties and overcome hostile schemes regardless of how strong and big are the powers behind them, and they are indeed strong and big. This, in the first place, needs wisdom. It also needs muscles, if one can say so. Undoubtedly, they both must be based on a principal thing; faith in God and the homeland.

The president said: National unity, which is the major objective and means, is now, without any doubt, much better than it was at any time in the past. We must take care of it, as well as of every big or small thing related to it. The situation requires constant vigilance and awareness, because if anything regardless of how small it may be, is left untreated, it may grow and get bigger and harm the march of the people and the homeland.

The president added: For the past 20 years, we have been treading our own path. Many of our friends and adversaries have in their statements, interviews, and writings, testified that Syria has found what other peoples and countries have not, and that Syria has found its own, peculiar experience. In fact, we did not seek to be distinctive, and distinction was not our objective. Our objective was to deal with our country's problems, to search for the formula or formulas that serve our people's interest. The formulas we have reached may have given rise the idea of distinction which the others refer to. Preserving national unity is our own responsibility. We are all concerned about preserving national unity, and about improving, developing, and entrenching it to the extent that it becomes a dictum for us and for our children and future generations. We must know that without national unity, in which we believe, the construction march may stumble, and may even retreat and deteriorate. National unity has helped us protect ourselves and confront our enemies in past years. I say today, as I have always said, that our national unity is our most important weapon.

President al-Asad added: If unity was a necessity in the past, it is now a more pressing need. It is a need, an asset, a weapon, a method, and an objective that we should preserve in the best way possible. If we cannot preserve it, our march will fail and we will render big services to the enemies of the homeland. And this is something rejected by us and by every citizen who is aware of his responsibilities and that of his homeland. I stand with the sons of the homeland in one position against the enemies of the homeland. Hence comes my courage, daring spirit, determination, and optimism to achieve our rights and attain our aspirations and objectives.

With regard to the peace process, the president said: We know that Syria is now waging a battle, which, in many of its stages, is more difficult than a military battle. We are waging a battle for peace, and it is far more difficult than our combat battles. I am saying this because I myself have waged combat and peace battles, and now I

am leading this process. Had we enough time now I would give examples of the difficult positions and stages we are passing through. We pass these stages most of the time with success. We do not relinquish or concede anything; neither we were arrogant. We adhered to justice and to what we believed was our right; we should defend our rights. Our people's decision is not to relinquish an iota of our rights regardless of difficulties and harsh days. We should not concede our rights—not some of them, not all of them, and not an iota of them.

Regarding the visit to Syria by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, President al-Asad said: They said that they are committed to the bases of the peace process. We also reiterated what is written in the documents and what we agreed on with the previous administration—that is, the bases in accordance with which the peace process was launched in Madrid. We also underscored the issue of the Palestinian deportees being a difficult problem that should be resolved.

President al-Asad also touched on Syria's stand on unilateral solutions. He said: Many times we waged wars alone, but certainly we did not enter the peace process alone. In fact, we did not join others to form a group when not all the [Arab] parties were in that group. When the issues of peace was first discussed with us, we emphasized that peace should be comprehensive and that it should cover all fronts.

Talabani Arrives in Damascus From Kuwait

PM1703160393 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 3

[Kamran Qurrah Dhaghi report: "Talabani: Jordan Willing To Receive Iraqi Opposition Delegation"]

[Text] Damascus—Well-informed sources expect Fu'ad Ma'sum, head of the "government of the Iraqi Kurdistan region," to resign within hours. The sources emphasized to AL-HAYAH that 'Abdallah Rasul, who is known as "Kawsart" and is a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] Political Bureau, " will be tasked with forming a coalition government to include in addition to the main two parties (the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party) all the other parties.

PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani, who arrived in Damascus from Kuwait, told AL-HAYAH that Jordan is willing to receive a delegation from the Iraqi opposition soon. And that the Iraqi National Congress is currently discussing the formation of the delegation.

He asserted that "the new (Kurdish) government's program will be to work to reinforce internal and border security, focus on reconstruction, and find resources to tackle the economic situation" in Kurdistan. He praised Ma'sum's government, which he said "sought to set up and consolidate administrative institutions and organs, and it succeeded in its task." Talabani said that relations between the two main Kurdish parties "have become strong, and it is no longer important for either of them to be allocated more or less ministries."

As is known, Talabani began his visit to Damascus nearly a month ago but cut it short to visit Kuwait. He held meetings with Syrian officials and representatives from the Iraqi opposition parties. He was expected to meet with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam yesterday.

Cited on al-Asad Support for Kurds

PM1803112993 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Kamran Qurrah Daghi report: "Talabani Stressed to al-Asad Kurds' Rejection of Partition of Iraq"]

[Text] Damascus—President Hafiz al-Asad yesterday received Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and held a meeting with him which lasted two hours and 10 minutes.

The Kurdish leader described the meeting to AL-HAYAH as "warm and friendly." He said that he stressed to al-Asad that "the Kurds do not seek to partition Iraq and are committed to achieving their rights within the framework of a unified democratic Iraq."

Talabani said that the Syrian president stressed Iraq's unity and "its people's right to get rid of dictatorship. After getting rid of it the Iraqi people can decide freely and democratically the system they want, and we will respect their decision."

Talabani said that al-Asad stressed "Arab-Kurdish brotherhood and considers relations between the two people the staunchest since the emergence of Islam. And he said that the Arabs do not accept the injustice inflicted on the Kurds and urged them to sympathize with them."

He pointed out that he briefed the Syrian president on the contacts the Iraqi and Kurdish opposition is making with neighboring states and explained to him the reasons which prompted the Kurds to set up their administration in Iraqi Kurdistan, "where the Iraqi regime tried to spread chaos by withdrawing all government services and then imposing an economic blockade." He went on: "Al-Asad promised to continue to provide humanitarian aid to the Kurds."

President al-Asad received Talabani at the end of the Kurdish leader's one-month visit to Syria during which he held talks with senior officials. He held five meetings with Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. Talabani cut off his visit to Syria last week and went to Kuwait, where he was received by the state's amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad. He also held talks with Heir Apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

The Kurdish leader stressed that Iraq's border with Iran was reopened "over a month ago" from the far north right to al-Basrah in the south. He added in a statement to AFP that only necessary food products and medicine pass across this border."

U.S. Role as 'Full Partner' Said in Doubt

JN1703171493 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Israeli Prime Minister Rabin has decided to cut short his visit to the United States, after having achieved his objectives, to rush back home and personally see to the implementation of more stringent security measures to quell the Palestinian people's intifadah against Israeli occupation.

According to Israeli terminology, security measures are synonymous with tyranny, repression, killing, imprisonment, demolition of homes, deportation, starvation, cordoning off of entire cities and villages, bone-breaking, slaughter of children, and other Israeli measures and practices which are well known to the world and very familiar to the Palestinian people. Rabin rushes back to Israel to personally supervise the implementation of security, or rather, new repressive and terrorist measures in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Israeli prime minister did not hesitate to announce from Washington that his eagerness for a quick return home was to achieve this particular aim. To us, Rabin even seemed much reassured that his persistence in terrorizing the Palestinians will not face serious or firm deterrence by Israel's great ally, the United States, after senior U.S. officials reaffirmed to him the security partnership between Israel and the United States. Perhaps, in the next few days, following Rabin's return to Israel, we will witness the first manifestations of this Israeli-U.S. security partnership through the Israeli prime minister's new measures designed to bring about security in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the advantage of the Israeli occupation.

We are well aware that the implications of the Israeli-U.S. security partnership are not confined to these initial manifestations, in terms of immediate measures in the occupied territories. These implications are deeper and more far-reaching, and they harm collective Arab security, both on the level of territory or people. The initial manifestations of this security partnership, which was announced in Washington two days ago, are only signs of what may be lying in wait for other Arabs should they resist occupation, reject its dictations, or cling to the struggle for their rights and territories.

Rabin is much reassured that the news of his fresh tyranny, repression, and terrorism, which he announced from Washington to the people in the occupied territories, will be understood by Israel's strategic partner, the United States. This is so because by setting up a U.S.-Israeli partnership in the pursuit of peace, Rabin has apparently managed to convince the U.S. Administration of his falsehoods and reversed facts that the resistance of occupation in the occupied territories means a rejection of peace, and consequently, it is legitimate for Israel to resort to further violence and harsher forms of terrorism.

We do not know what fresh acts of terror will emerge from the Israeli masters of terrorism—acts of terror which will be even more severe than those which they have thus far pursued against our people in the occupied territories in a bid to quell resistance as a prelude to peace, or rather, as a prelude to the imposition of capitulation. How can the world accept such falsehoods and deception? How can the rejection of occupation be regarded as terrorism? How can the killing and deportation of citizens who reject occupation be regarded as a service meant to achieve peace? Does peace aim to entrench occupation and provide security to the occupiers? Is this the meaning of the new Israeli-U.S. security partnership?

The Arabs welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's announcement, during his recent tour, that Washington intends to play the role of a full partner in the peace talks. They have done so from the premise that such a role will activate the peace talks—talks which Israel has tried to foil throughout the eight previous rounds. However, the Israeli-U.S. partnership which emerged during Rabin's visit to Washington, whether in pursuit of peace or security, raises several questions among the Arabs on how exactly Washington can play the role of a full partner in the peace talks, the ninth round of which is scheduled for the second half of April.

Afghanistan

Clashes Reported Between Hezb-e Wahdat, Shura-e Nezar

LD1703202893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] West Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, was the scene of sporadic clashes between the forces of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami [Islamic Unity Party] and Shura-e Nezar [Islamic Council] today.

According to the reporters of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran and IRNA, the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami forces this evening repelled attacks by the Shura-e Nezar forces in the Silu-ye Markazi and Kute Sangi regions of Kabul.

This happens at a time when the president of Afghanistan, Borhanoddin Rabbani, has announced that he has to hold talks with that country's new Prime Minister Hekmatyar, before a general meeting is set up to appoint members of the cabinet.

Nationality Coordination Council Hails Cease-Fire

LD1603194493 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Council of Islamic Nationality Coordination of Afghanistan issued an announcement in Kabul city on 16 March, addressed to the Muslim nation of Afghanistan and esteemed Kabul citizens.

The announcement says: It is hereby brought to your attention that the Council of Islamic Nationality Coordination has recently been formed recently, due to the dire necessity of our Islamic society. It comprises Ulemas, spiritual leaders, university lecturers and representatives, and elders of the Islamic nationalities. It has begun its beneficial work toward providing an atmosphere of Islamic fraternity and maintaining public security.

In connection with the recent clashes, this council has held continuous discussions with esteemed Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, minister of defense of the Islamic state; Ostad Abdol Rab Rasul Sayaf, the leader of Ettehad-e Eslami; and Hojjat ol-Eslam wal-Moslemin Ostad Abdol Ali Mazari, secretary general of Wahdat-e Eslami. As a result, the council has fortunately succeeded in obtaining official agreement from all sides concerning the observation of permanent cease-fire and putting an end to taking hostages.

The council hopes that the cease-fire will continue and win the full confidence of the noble citizens of Kabul, the announcement concludes.

The Council of Islamic Nationality Coordination held a meeting in Kabul today, which expressed support for the readiness displayed by responsible officials of those parties involved in the recent fighting.

A BAKHTAR military correspondent reported that the meeting opened with a few verses *from the holy Koran*. Mawlawi Mohammad Eshaq, Mawlawi Ataorrahman Salim, Hojat ol-Eslam Baligh, Hojat ol-Eslam wal-Moslemin al-Haj Sayed Ahmad Mobarez, and esteemed Mohammad Asef Khawari then took turns to speak. They read out a 12-point draft of the council. They expressed thanks for the agreement of esteemed responsible officials and declared full support for the cessation of war and fratricide and the restoration of peace. They asked commanders and responsible officials on all sides not to resort to (?violence) against each other and to welcome permanent peace.

The meeting ended with the recitation of prayers.

Defense Ministry Reassures Hazara Population of Kabul

LD1403223893 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 14 Mar 93

[Excerpts] After the conclusion of the peace accord and the announcement in Islamabad of cooperation between the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the jihadi leaders, confidence has returned to Kabul that the bitter times will be forgotten and all jihadi leaders will take part in cooperation with the Islamic state in ruling the country and creating an atmosphere free of enmity and armed hostility. [passage omitted]

Unfortunately, however, according to BAKHTAR correspondents, who are reporting the current situation in various parts of the city since the cease-fire announcement, it seems that so far some of our Hazara brothers are still in doubt about the normalization of the situation. They are refraining from taking part in daily affairs in many parts of the city.

The BAKHTAR authorities therefore contacted the Ministry of Defense of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in this regard and were told the following: The Islamic state is the property of all our mojahed nation and Kabul city is a common home for all tribes and nationalities living in the country. All Kabul citizens, in particular our Hazara brothers, can move about, live, and work in any part of Kabul city they choose.

The mopping-up operations, carried out in Kabul city's fifth ward at the repeated request of the inhabitants of this ward in order to purge rebellious elements, was in no way a measure targeted against our noble Hazara nation. The Defense Ministry instructed all its posts and troops before and after the operation not to create any sort of problem that might impede the movement and daily work of our Hazara brothers. They should not let an opportunist engage in such actions.

Now that the peace accord has been signed between the Islamic state and the jihadi parties, it brings with it good prospects for a permanent peace, stability, and security in the country. The time has arrived when every sort of mistrust should be forgotten and the faithful citizens of

Kabul, without consideration of tribal, religious, national, or other links, should resume their normal and tranquil life in confidence and security. No one will be allowed to place obstacles in the way of the movements and daily work of our compatriots, in particular those of Kabul citizens.

The Ministry of Defense assures the noble and Muslim inhabitants of the country's capital, and in particular our Hazara nationals, that they may continue their normal life without any concern. They should telephone the Kabul garrison on 26721 or 24584 should they encounter even the slightest hindrance.

Commission on Arms Permits, Buildings, Prices, Curfew

LD1503112693

[Editorial Report] Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto in its 1530 GMT newscast on 14 March carries a series of announcements by the Kabul City Security Commission, as follows:

"Announcement by Kabul City Security Commission: To maintain further order and security in Kabul City and to regulate security activity, it is brought to the attention of all security organs and jihadi forces who have received permits to carry arms that they should submit their lists to the personnel department of the Ministry of Defense of the Islamic State of Afghanistan for the renewal of their permits. The previous permits will be invalid from 18 March. Security officials should act in accordance with the instructions of Kabul City Security Commission."

The following is then read out: "Announcement by Kabul City Security Commission: A number of selfish and opportunist elements, disregarding the announcements previously made by Kabul municipality and the Kabul garrison command, are engaged in building houses and shops in various wards of Kabul City against city laws and the city's master plan. This action by these elements is a clear crime and is in violation of the enforced laws. These persons are considered liable for punishment.

"Kabul City Security Commission has commissioned all responsible organs, including the police command, national security, and Kabul garrison forces to destroy such houses and shops as soon as possible and investigate those people who have embarked upon such unlawful actions."

A third announcement follows: "Announcement by Kabul City Security Commission: To bring order to the provision of primary goods to Kabul citizens in line with the realization of the aims of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, price lists have been fixed and distributed after consultation with the representatives of various trades in Kabul and in agreement with the authorized commissions. The Kabul City Security Commission requests that all providers of primary goods to Kabul citizens adjust their activity in line with the fixed prices and refrain from any sort of refusal, overcharging, and economic sabotage during this auspicious month of Ramadan and the arrival of 'Id al-Fitr. Those in violation will be severely investigated under the Shari'an."

An announcement by Kabul Municipality is then carried: "In accordance with a decision made by Kabul city commission to determine prices, the price of a 200g loaf of bread has been fixed at 50 afghani as of 14 March. Also bakeries should refrain from baking double-loaf bread. Kabul citizens should telephone Kabul 20140 or 22838 in case of complaint." Following an announcement on traffic regulations, a further statement is read: "Esteemed citizens of Kabul are respectfully asked to observe the overnight curfew from 2300 to 0400."

General Tells of Efforts To Establish Peace

LD1603215893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] While the situation in the Afghan capital, Kabul, was reported as calm on Tuesday, western Kabul was the scene of sporadic fighting between the forces of the government and the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami. According to a Central News Unit report, the government forces attacked positions of Hezb-e Wahdat-Eslami on Monday but were forced to retreat when confronted with the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami forces.

Meanwhile, Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami has called on the peace corps to dispatch a supervisory delegation to identify the offenders. While the two warring sides in Afghanistan are accusing one another of violating the cease-fire, the peace delegation is attempting to end the war in Kabul by way of contacts with the warring sides.

Announcing the above news in an interview with our correspondent, the head of the peace delegation, General Hamid Gul, added: We have used our past experiences in order to bring these conflicts to a complete halt. In my contact with the commanders of the warring sides, they all declared their total readiness to cooperate with the peace delegation in order to bring the conflict to a complete halt.

National Security Official on Providing Security for Kabul

LD1703210393 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In order to ensure tranquillity and protect security in Kabul city, it is required that all the armed forces of the country, including national security organs and the police, coordinate their efforts and pave the ground for a secure climate for the work and activity of Kabul City Muslim citizens. The above point was stated by esteemed Fahim, head of the National Security Department, in an interview with a military correspondent of Bakhtar Information Agency.

He added: Recently, a joint council was formed comprising bodies from the Department of National Security, police, the Kabul garrison, and Kabul municipality in order to put into action a series of serious measures aimed at ensuring further order and calmness in the city. The purpose of forming this council is to capture thieves and robbers, seize smuggled and illegal weapons, and purge the city of irresponsible armed groups who cause inconvenience to the citizens of Kabul city.

The other aim of this joint council is to organize the main roads and streets by removing jerry-built shops and containers [word as received] which are placed in various parts of the city; and to prevent the construction of private buildings, which is taking place without prior authorization from the relevant authorities and in the green areas of the city.

Esteemed Fahim added that with the help of Almighty God, the alert bodies of the Department of National Security have been successful in arresting a large number of weapons smugglers recently and have captured and seized more than 300 types of various weapons.

The bodies of the Department of National Security are constantly at the service of God [word indistinct] and realization of the programs of the Islamic State and will not spare any efforts in ensuring order and security jointly with other forces of the Islamic State. We request that Kabul citizens render their cooperation to the officials of the Department of National Security in capturing and arresting the criminals.

Hekmatyar Reiterates 'No Personal Enmity' with Mas'ud

BK1603135193 Islamabad THE NATION in English 16 Mar 93 pp 1,4

[Text] Peshawar—Afghan Prime Minister designate and chief of Hezb-e Islami Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar said that future government of Afghanistan will be comprising on representatives and nominees of all segments and political forces. But he did not define the segments and groups which according to him will be given a share in the future government.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Eng. Hekmatyar flanked by his deputy Qazi Mohammad Amin Waqad, said that all the Afghans were disheartened from fighting and uncertain situation of their motherland and desirous of peace and tranquility. He added that all the Afghan leaders should deviate themselves from fighting against each other and focus their attention on restoration of peace and tranquillity in their country as well as forge unity amongst their ranks for its early reconstruction and rebuilding.

Eng. Hekmatyar while appreciating the Islamabad Accord, made it clear that [word indistinct] is no solution to issues and all the matters could be disposed of through peaceful and political ways. He hoped that all the Afghan segments and groups who supported the Islamabad Accord will sincerely work for its early implementation. In this connection, Eng. Hekmatyar praised Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran for helping the Afghans for signing the Historic accord. He said that it was crystal clear that problems could not be resolved through military ways.

He urged all the Afghan political forces to forget the past and join hands with each other for restoration of peace and establish tradition of not firing even a single bullet during formation of governments or transfer of power.

Answering a question, Eng. Hekmatyar appreciated decision of powerful militia Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum who accept Islamabad Accord. "It is a geo-development. He said that it seems that all segments and forces favour the peaceful and political efforts for resolving the Afghan conflict. He was of the firm belief that like Rashid Dostum, all the Afghan segments and forces will take practical steps for the implementation of Islamabad Accord will be a unity accord."

When asked about his stand over future of Rashid Dostum, Eng. Hekmatyar said that fate of Dostum could be decided in the Mojahedin leaders meeting at Jalalabad. He added the meeting would also decide the fate of other Afghan groups. Eng. Hekmatyar made it clear that future government in Kabul could be considered a government of all Afghans and every person having a right to enjoy his share in the said government. To an other question, Eng. Hekmatyar said that future of the former Afghan presidents Babrak Karmal and Dr Najibollah will be decided by the future cabinet or Afghan leaders in their future meetings. He said that according to his information, former Afghan President Dr. Najibollah is still in Kabul. He further said that they were determinded to honour the general amnesty which all the Mojahedin forces so announced.

When his attention was diverted towards the Iranian President's statement who announced for sending his country's armed forces in the Islamic peace-keeping forces to Afghanistan, Eng. Hekmatyar said that nothing about peace-keeping forces was mentioned in the Islamabad Accord. He said that to monitor the ceasefire accord, the signitories were agreed to form a commission which along with Afghan will be comprised on nominees of the Organisation of Islamic Countries.

Referring to future the Afghan defence minister, Eng. Hekmatyar said that it was a component of the cabinet and could be decided by the Afghan leaders through mutual understanding. He said that he has no personal enmity with Engineer Ahmad Shah Mas'ud. He added that he wants to nominate a person defence minister who is not only controversial but never involved in fighting [sentence as published].

He said that according to Islamabad Accord, Prime Minister with consultation of President will form his cabinet. He said he has no intention to ignore contribution of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and he will be assigned an

important post in the interim government. He said that there is no importance of the defence ministry during peace time.

Eng. Hekmatyar further said that he invited all the leading Mojahedin leaders to Jalalabad meeting and was hopeful about their presence in capital of Nangarhar Province. He said the forthcoming Jalalabad meeting will discuss a number of important matters. He said that he is desirous a complete peace and tranquility in Afghanistan which is "possible through general elections". He said that proposed [words indistinct] will finalise its arrangements in a period of eight months and first of all Shura will be formed through general election. The Shura will frame constitution, under which fresh elections will be held. He said that it was needs of the hour that all of them should deviate themselves from fighting for power and wait for the mandate of the masses.

Answering a query Eng. Hekmatyar said that countless Afghan currency had been printed during last several years which had decreased its value at international level.

He said he would decide future of Afghani currency with consultation of economic experts. "In this connection, we will constitute a commission to work on this.

The Commission will find out ways and means for bringing economic prosperity in war-ravaged country.

Eng. Hekmatyar calleu upon Afghan economic experts, skilled and trained professionals to come back to their motherland and contribute their share in rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan."

Defense Minister Issues Order on Absent Troops

LD1703193793 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Order No. 018, dated 16 March 1993, by the minister of defense of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, concerning the call up of troops absent from units of the armed forces.

In order to meet the need to fill the units from the viewpoint of attendance of troops and also to solve the problem of absent soliders, taking into acount the situation, I instruct the following:

1. Those troops who left their units for various reasons after the victory of the Islamic State on 28 April 1992 shall return to their units to continue their service. They should report to the Organization Department to have their documents inspected.

2. Such troops of the Department of Organization and Mobilization will be [words indistinct] or will be placed in units of the central organization. The needs of units should be taken into consideration.

3. The period of absence of the troops will not be counted as part of their service. However, they will get pardoned from legal punishment.

4. The time in service before and after their absence is to be counted in the period of service.

5. The matter should be brought to the attention of relevant authorities, and necessary measures should be taken.

[Signed] Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, minister of defense of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Issues Instruction on Discharges

LD1703203993 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] An instruction by the defense minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan on procedures for discharging soldiers from military service based on the Law for General Military Obligation, dated 16 March 1993.

Regarding the discharge from military service of those soldiers who have completed their terms of service, based on the Law for General Military Obligation, I instruct the following:

Based on the Law for General Military Obligation, issued on 23 September 1991:

1. The military discharge cards should be issued in the form of two terms, spring term (March and April) and autumn term (September and October).

2. The military dischage cards for the soldiers should be issued by their units after the correct calculation of the terms of their service and should be controlled and monitored by the military commissariate.

3. The heads of logistics of armed units and heads of [word indistinct] are responsible for the timely implementation of the discharge procedures and the correct calculation of the term of service.

4. The units and commmissariate should send a report on the discharge, on time, to the Department of Organization and Logistics of the Ministry of Defense.

5. The above instruction is in force until the update and amendment of the present Law on General Military Obligation. Instruction No. 013, dated 4 November 1992, is considered invalid.

[Signed] Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, defense minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Kabul-Parwan Highway Reopened 16 Mar

LD1603190193 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The Kabul-Parwan highway, which was closed for some time due to certain reasons, was reopened to traffic today as a result of efforts made by the security officials of the Islamic state and the commanders and elders of the areas around this highway.

A relevant source said in this connection that jihadi commanders and members of the security posts located along the Kabul-Parwan highway have decided to prevent the erection of obstacles which previouslyt created problems for the vehicles and passengers on this route, and they will not allow any elements to create problems and difficulties on this highway. As a result of this decision, there is no obstacle to the traffic of vehicles and passengers, and our noble people can travel on this route with full confidence.

Rabbani Calls On Afghan Migrants to Return Home

LD1503171393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 15 Mar 93

[Text] Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, who came to Tehran accompanied by other Afghan leaders, left Tehran for Mashhad today. After paying his respects at the sacred shrine of His Holiness Reza, may God's blessing be upon him, he said to our correspondent: The Afghan migrants must return to their country and assist in the country's reconstruction and development. The Afghan president expressed the hope that the recent agreement would bring security back to Afghanistan and provide favorable conditions for the return of the migrants.

Expressing his gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran for taking care of the Afghan migrants, Borhanoddin Rabbani said: We count upon Muslim countries, in particular the Islamic Republic of Iran, to assist in the future reconstruction of Afghanistan. He also called on the United Nations and other international organizations to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

According to our correspondent, he left Mashhad this evening for Kabul.

'Zionist' Radios Accused of Hostile Propaganda

LD1403144393 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Dari to Afghanistan 0900 GMT 14 Mar 93

["Commentary" by Radio Message of Freedom commentator: "Here Again Are the Self-Interested, Arrogant Radios"]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate:

Compatriots of ours are aware that the long-awaited peace accord was concluded in Islamabad between the leaders of the jehadi formations, and this has increased the hope for peace. As far as the spirit of the sessions and the text of the peace accord are concerned, all say that peace—God willing—will be restored in the country.

However, from the very beginning, it was noticeably quite clear to the nation and those who follow the process of peace that the self-interested Zionist radio, led by BBC Radio and its correspondents—who have hostility against calmness and peace and against our mojahedin and heroic nation—are trying to change somehow to hostility the peace-seeking stance of the relevant parties. Their self-interested propaganda clearly shows that they have launched a new campaign of propaganda, which follows their specific and carefully prearranged programs.

They shamelessly broadcast words and news that is distorted. They use such words and sentences that all have a provocative aspect. When they find themselves unable to extract words that can satisfy their evil ambition from the top responsible officials, they stubbornly drag to the other side of the telephone irresponsible and unaware individuals and thus extract from them easily the desired words that conform with their divisionist program. They then rely on these words with pomposity and pass them on to their radio listeners.

If you look carefully, the peace accords concluded in Islamabad represent the gathering of the leaders of the Jehadi formations, as well as the presence of Hekmatyar in these talks and the principled, national and Islamic stance of brother Hekmatyar. All of these are nothing but a desire to secure national unity and strive for such a political [word indistinct] where selfishness and self-interest can have no place. This has really worried the arrogant who are lying in wait, who try in vain and very hard to sabotage this hope of our nation.

Here we are addressing esteemed officials and leaders of the Jehadi formations to be very aware. Do not let international Zionism, which is in control of these colonialist radios and has launched a cold-war of divisionist propaganda, to achieve its evil aspirations. The esteemed officials must watch each word and every interview they give. [passage indistinct]

Bangladesh

Visiting French Envoy Lauds Economic Development

BK1403153793 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1430 GMT 14 Mar 93

[Text] The French president's special envoy, Madame Anne Lauvergeon, who is now visiting Bangladesh, has lauded the country's economic development over the past two years. The French envoy said this when she called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia today. She further told the prime minister that the French Government gives due credit to the present democratic system in Bangladesh. The French envoy assured continued assistance and cooperation to Bangladesh in its efforts to achieve self-reliance. She expressed satisfaction over the successful completion of the first phase of flood control projects in Bangladesh which was implemented with French assistance. The envoy also expressed the hope that the second phase of the work will also be speedily implemented as a democratic government is in power.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia thanked the special envoy for coming to visit Bangladesh and expressed satisfaction over the relationship between the two countries. She also conveyed her thanks to the French Government for its assistance in the implementation of flood control programs. The prime minister also extended her greetings to the French president and Madame Mitterrand.

Bangladesh will receive a grant of 35 crore taka from France during the current year for the implementation of flood control projects. A protocol to this effect was signed in Dhaka today.

Aid for Development Projects To Continue

BK1503151593 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1430 GMT 15 Mar 93

[Text] France will continue to extend assistance to Bangladesh for its economic and industrial development. This assurance was given by the visiting French envoy, Madame Anne Lauvergeon, when she called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas in Dhaka today. The French envoy also told the president that French assistance for the flood control projects will also continue. She praised the efforts of the present government for the overall development of the country.

President Biswas stressed the need for more high-level visits between representatives of the two countries for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Steps Taken To Boost Foreign Investments

BK1703160093 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1430 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has directed the Board of Investment [BOI] to take fresh initiatives for attracting local and foreign investment in Bangladesh with a view to expediting the industrialization process. She said this at a meeting held at the International Conference Center in Dhaka yesterday to review the activities of the BOI. The meeting was presided over by the prime minister.

This was the first meeting of the BOI since the democratic government came to power. Bangladesh missions abroad have been asked to take measures to attract foreign investors by apprising them about the favorable and profitable investment climate in the country.

BOI Vice Chairman Mustafizur Rahman informed the meeting yesterday that a total of (511) investment proposals worth 1,010 crore taka were approved during the fiscal year 1991-1992. Among the proposed investors are 46 foreign companies. Their investment proposal amounts to 211 crore taka.

At present, Bangladesh is maintaining liaison with different foreign agencies abroad with a view to attracting investors. Several decisions were made yesterday to boost investments. Three standing committees of the BOI headed by the vice chairman have been formed for this purpose. These committes are: Inter Agency Coordination Committee, Advisory Committee for Increasing Industrial Exports, and (Committee for Foreign Investors). Four members of the parliament have also been included in these committees. These MPs are M. Akbar Ali, Harunur Rashid Khan, Wing Commander (Ret'd) Hamidullah Khan, and Ataur Rahman Khan.

The meeting was informed that many countries including Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Italy, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Finland, Hong Kong, and Pakistan have shown keen interest in investing in Bangladesh.

At present industrialization is very essential for Bangladesh. Economic development in the country is needed to improve the standard of living of its 11 crore population. This development is only possible through industrialization. It reduces dependence on imports, creates job opportunities for unemployed manpower, and makes the economy self-reliant. For this purpose the government has given priority to industrialization and a liberal industrial policy has been formulated. In this policy, emphasis has been given to the development of the private sector. For the rapid industrialization of the country a favorable and healthy atmosphere is being created. But foreign investors should be informed about these facilites. In this regard, the missions of Bangladesh abroad can play a vital role. Facilities which are given to foreign investors in Bangladesh are rarely found in the developing countries of the Third World. In this connection, it must be mentioned that domestic peace and discipline is needed to attract foreign investors.

Tribal Insurgents Urged To Extend Ceasefire

BK1803093993 Dhaka DAINIK ITTEFAQ in Bengali 15 Mar 93 p 1

[By Osman Gani Mansur and Torun Kumar Bhattacharya]

[Text] Government has given a formal proposal to the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Council to extend the ceasefire till 31 May with a view to maintaining the continuity of the peace talks. Earlier, the time limit of the ceasefire was fixed till 31 March 1993. A letter containing this proposal was handed over to Shangshdhajan Chakma, Convenor of the Liaison Committee on Friday. It also stated the cause behind the delay in the holding of the third round of talks and other related issues. This letter has been signed by Mohammed Salimullah, Director, Special Affairs Division, in the prime minister's office. It has been sent to the leaders of the Solidarity Council.

During the last meeting between the government committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Solidarity Council leaders held on 26 December 1992, it was decided to hold the next meeting in the first week of

February. But it has not been possible to hold this meeting as the winter session of the parliament was in progress.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Government has responded to an invitation extended by the Indian government to send its committee members to Tripura to visit the refugee camps and motivate the tribals to come back. This visit is likely to take place in the third week of April. The date for the third round of talks will be fixed after this visit.

Informed quarters said that the third round of peace talks may be held either at the end of April or in the first half of May. It may be recalled that after the first round of talks between the two sides held in Khagrachari on 5 November, the government decided to suspend the land survey work in Chittagong Hill Tracts till the return of the tribal refugees from Tripura following a request made by the leaders of the Solidarity Council.

Workers Threaten Future Stoppages as 48-Hour Strike Ends

BK1703074493 Hong Kong AFP in English 0624 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Dhaka, March 17 (AFP)—Bangladesh workers on Wednesday threatened fresh strike action in support of their wage demands as a nationwide 48-hour work stoppage came to an end.

The Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP)—a conglomerate of 16 trade unions including the labour wing of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)—warned in a statement that it would launch a new campaign after Ramadan, the Moslem fasting month, unless its demands were met.

The threat came despite government warnings Tuesday that unless the workers reported for work they would be punished.

Except for banks and government organisations, most industries were closed during the two-day strike, which was mostly peaceful.

Inter-district road communications came to a halt and trains were briefly stopped at several points, officials said.

Opposition political groups backed the strike, which was called to press demands for a minimum monthly wage of 1,000 taka (about 26 U.S. dollars) from an average 300 taka (about seven dollars).

The government had offered a minimum wage of 950 taka (24.35 dollars) for the public sector, but union leaders rejected this on the grounds that the authorities had not specified a time for its implementation.

However, the Bangladesh Employers Association (BEA), which groups private sector entrepreneurs, in a separate statement congratulated the government for not yielding to SKOP's pressure.

The BEA, which said it would pay workers according to merit, estimated that an additional 5.180 billion taka would be required from the national treasury if SKOP's demands were met.

Both BEA and the World Bank had warned Zia not to bow to the workers.

One official said the latest strike could cost the impoverished south Asian nation some three billion taka (77 million dollars) in lost production and scare off foreign investors.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said the government's task was to work for the welfare of the people and not to submit to "irrational and irresponsible pressure from the vested quarters.

"There shall be no more surrender in the future and a handful of people will not be allowed to hold the economy hostage through terror tactics," the UNITED NEWS OF BANGLADESH agency quoted him as saying Tuesday.

India

Calcutta Death Toll 60; Red Alert Sounded in Bihar

BK1803032493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The death toll in Tuesday's bomb explosion in Calcutta has gone up to 60 with 10 more bodies recovered from the debris since last night. Meanwhile, forensic experts from Bombay sent by the center arrived in the city last night. They have already visited the spot. A team of experts from Delhi are also on the job. The chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, is to make a statement on the steps being taken to investigate the incident in the State Assembly tomorrow. The left front chairman, Mr. Sailen Dasgupta, urged the government to nab the culprits. The pradesh [state] Congress-I prsident, Mr. Somen Mitra, has demanded a full inquiry into the incident. The minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, who visited Calcutta yesterday, met the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, in New Delhi last night to apprise him of the situation.

In Uttar Pradesh, security arrangements are being tightened in view of the recent bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta. This was disclosed by the state director general of police, Mr. Prakash Singh, while talking to newsmen in Kanpur.

In Bihar, a red alert has been sounded throughout the state in view of the bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta.

All district magistrates have been directed to take precautionary steps and make security arrangements in and around important public places like markets, railway stations, television and radio stations.

In Karnataka, a high-powered crisis management committee has been constituted by the Karnataka government in the wake of the bomb explosions in Bombay and Calcutta. An official announcement in this regard was made in Bangalore yesterday. The state chief minister, Mr. M. Veerappa Moily, has expressed his deep shock at Tuesday night's bomb blast in Calcutta. In a message to the West Bengal chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, he conveyed his deepest sympathy to those bereaved or injured.

Train Derailed, Supplies Affected Due to Bihar Agitation

BK1703161493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Bihar, railway tracks were damaged in two places in southeastern railway this morning as the economic blockade sponsored by the All India Jharkhand Committee entered the second day today. Railway sources told our Ranchi correspondent that a passenger train derailed between Lohardaga and Idgao as the fishplates and slippers were removed from the track. There is no report of any casualty in the incident. Rail services were also disrupted for more than three hours at Muri Barkakana section due to bomb explosion on the track near Sondubra station. Later, the track was repaired and the rail services restored. The movement of bauxite and coal is reported to be affected by the disruption.

Three More Bombay Bomb Blast Suspects Arrested

BK1803034193 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Three more suspects have been arrested by police for Friday's spate of explosions in Bombay and sleuths are zeroing in on the absconding Memon family allegedly linked to a drug syndicate overseas, with the probe indicating their involvement in the worst ever bomb attacks. The police commissioner, Mr. A.S. Samra, told newspersons that in a big breakthrough, two men—a dealer and his associate who supplied cars used in the blasts to the subversives—were picked up in Bombay and another notorious criminal from Bhopal last night.

Meanwhile, hoax calls continue to flood the Bombay police. There was a bomb threat to THE TIMES OF INDIA building today. Police searched the whole building. The call turned out to be a hoax.

No Linkage Seen Between Bombay, Calcutta Bombings

BK1803090893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The government told the Lok Sabha today that nothing has come to its notice so far suggesting any linkage between the bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta. The minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, who visited Calcutta yesterday, told the house that the investigations are still in progress and it is not possible at this stage to give any definite conclusion on the linkage. However, nothing can be ruled out, he said. Making a statement, Mr. Pilot said additional paramilitary forces are being made available to the state government and the center will provide all help to deal with the situation. A similar statement was made by Mr. Rajesh Pilot in the Rajya Sabha later. Meanwhile, the death toll in Tuesday's bomb blast in Calcutta has gone up to 64 with the recovery of 14 more bodies from under the rubble last night. The chief secretary told UNI [UNITED NEWS OF INDIA] that the clearing operation is still on and that he feared more bodies are trapped under the debris.

Commentary Views Government's Package for Punjab

BK1803054793 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Commentary by journalist, Professor Bhabani Sen Gupta]

[Text] The long, gory tragedy created by man in Punjab has almost come to an end. Peace has returned to a land famous for its fertility and for its peasants who have turned it into the granary of the country. Elections have brought a popular government to power. If voting in the state elections was not impressive, the local elections that followed saw a heavy turnout.

A small but significant beginning in restoring normalcy was announced on the floor of the Lok Sabha yesterday by the minister of home affairs. A package has been prepared to create 105,000 jobs. For this, 275 crore rupees will be invested. When implemented, this will surely be a good beginning to give the youth of Punjab a meaningful, positive direction in life. It has been known for years that perhaps a single most salient reason why a youth took to militancy was that he found himself wasted in society. He had no work and no job. The package will bring to him rays of a better future. Jobs and industries are important, no doubt, but other bigger problems will also have to be addressed.

Now that the militants have virtually faded away, Akali politics has begun to return with its familiar footsteps as demands. Punjab has long been denied several legitimate demands. The return of Chandigarh as its sole capital, equitable sharing of river waters, territorial swap that was promised in the Rajiv-Longowal accord. True, the union government's hands are full with many other

problems. The blasts in Bombay, the ongoing conflict in Kashmir, politics of confrontation, to name only three of them. But, it will be a grave mistake to assume that political issues in Punjab can be put on the back burner. The Akali leaders who are returning to the forefront of politics are men of responsibility. They should not disturb the peace by holding rallies that are not essential. The government, on its part, must not give the impression that it will not allow the Akali leaders to carry out normal democratic political activity. Let a dialogue begin between the government and political elements opposed to the government and let us hope that these talks conducted earnestly by both sides will produce an accord which will give a greater spur to Punjab's development than it has know so far.

Concern Over Chinese Arms Supplies to Pakistan, Burma

BK1603130793 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 10 Mar 93 p 12

[By M.K. Dhar]

[Text] NEW DELHI, March 9—Reports about huge arms transfers by China to Myanmar [Burma] and Pakistan, including medium range missiles and aircraft, are causing concern among official circles wbich fear hardening of the attitude of these two countries towards neighbours.

Even though Beijing has agreed to abide by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines it has not stopped sales of missiles to various countries. In Pakistan's case, it is assisting in the production of the 400 km range HATF-2 surface-to-surface missile which, when further developed, could carry nuclear warheads. Recently it supplied at least a dozen M-11 missiles to Pakistan, ignoring U.S. warnings.

Official circles feel that further arming of Pakistan will only increase its hostility towards India and augment its capacity to supply weapons on a large-scale to terrorists operating inside Jammu and Kashmir and those under training in camps across the Line of Control. China has emerged as the third largest exporter of arms to developing countries supplying to the tune of U.S. $2.6 billion last year.

China has entered into a U.S. $1.4 billion arms deal with Myanmar which includes radar, anti-aircraft guns, 25 F-6 and F-7 jet fighters, 100 tanks, 150 air-to-air missiles and patrol boats. China is also making its presence felt in the Indian Ocean through Myanmar ports and is building a naval base in the Irrawaddy Delta at Hanggyi island and upgrading the one on great Cocus island, very close to the Andaman islands, which has a radar station and a power telescope. The strength of its armed forces, which in the eighties was about 1,90,000, [as published] is reported to have touched 3,00,000 [as published] this year with plans to take it to 5,00,000 [as published] by 1995.

India's political relations with Myanmar have remained frozen particularly after the house-arrest of the Nobel peace-prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and New Delhi's condemnation of certain actions of the Army's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Border trade between the two countries also remains suspended. A dialogue at the level of foreign secretaries last year was largely unproductive because of India's strong stand on the issue of Suu Kyi's release and installation of a popular civilian Government. No fresh dialogue is planned in the near future though some overtures have been made. The new Indian Ambassador, Mr. G. Parthasarathy, who was here recently for consultations has received indications that Myanmar is interested in improving its relations with India.

China and Thailand are maintaining excellent economic relations with Rangoon. Many Chinese advisers are stated to be working in Myanmar, at some of the ports and also construction sites close to the Indian border. Beijing's arms sales and its physical presence in Myanmar could upset the strategic balance in the region, according to diplomatic observers. Agreements on border trade and on terrorism and drug trafficking are currently under negotiation.

Apart from transfer of conventional weapons, it is export of nuclear technology by China to Pakistan which has caused widespread concern.

U.S. intelligence assessment is that China's arms sales are driven by economic, political as well as strategic considerations. Beijing's arms transfers to Pakistan have generally been made at "friendship prices", suggesting minimal economic motives. With U.S. military assistance to Pakistan having been withheld, China continues to be its main arms supplier.

The controversial aspect of Beijing's military transfers to Islamabad involves non-conventional weaponry. China has reportedly supplied it uranium for enrichment, confirmed its designs for nuclear devices and perhaps allowed it to test a nuclear device in China's Lop Nar desert, although it is claimed that Pakistan's nuclear devices being enriched uranium based do not need testing.

Over the years China's arms supplies to Pakistan include 1500 T- 59 and T-60 tanks, 350 fighter aircraft including F-6, F-8 and Q-5, 30 naval vessels including 2 Romeo Class submarines and short to intermediate-range missiles including M-11, capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Beijing has also helped Islamabad develop aircraft refitting factories for the overhaul of the fighter aircraft and is working on joint production of Karakoram-8 trainer. Indigenous capacity to produce a new version of T-69 tank with a 105-mm gun and laser range finder and computerised fire-control system is also being built. Annual production is expected to be in the range of 150 to 200 upgraded tanks a year. Help is also available for producing a Chinese-designed surface-to-air missile,

similar to Stinger and also Red-arrow-8 anti-tank missiles. China has also agreed to supply a 300 mw nuclear reactor and reportedly discussed the possibility of supplying a nuclear-powered submarine.

As regards Iran, China has permitted licensed production of surface-to-surface missiles. The possibility of Chinese-designed arms being supplied by Pakistan to it is also not ruled out. Even though China has proclaimed many times over that it does not supply weapons to aggravate tensions or to countries at war, during the Iran-Iraq war as many as 150 F-6 and F-7 fighter aircraft, nearly 700 tanks, 300 APC [armored personnel carriers] and 1600 pieces of artillery and thousands of anti-tank missiles and SAMs [surface to air missiles] were sold to Tehran.

China is now reportedly modernising its own defence equipment and acquiring Su-27 and MiG 31 jets as well as ground defences and sophisticated radar systems. Even though its attention is now devoted mainly to economic developments, modernisation and expansion of its armed forces—it already has the world's largest army—is not being ignored. All these developments are causing worry to Indian policy planners due to the possibility of the security environment in South Asia deteriorating further.

Moldovan President Arrives; Received by Sharma, Rao

BK1703093693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] The visiting president of the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, has expressed the hope that his visit to India will open up new vistas of cooperation between the two countries. He was talking to newspersons at the Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] in New Delhi today.

Earlier, a warm reception was accorded to Mr. Snegur on his arrival on a three-day visit to India. The president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, were among those who received Mr. Snegur at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Bilateral Ties To Be Strengthened

BK1703163893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] India and Moldova are to strengthen bilateral ties. The two countries will also sign six agreements marking the state visit of President Mircea Ion Snegur to this country from today. These agreements cover economic cooperation and trade among others.

The prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, announced a humanitarian assistance of 50 lakh rupees, mostly medicines, to Moldova. During the official-level talks with the visiting president, he also conveyed New Delhi's readiness to offer scholarships for training Moldovan personnel in India. Mr. Snegur appreciated the offer.

The two leaders held a one-to-one meeting and reviewed bilateral cooperation and various regional issues. Mr. Snegur conveyed his assessment of Moldova's relations with neighboring countries. Mr. Narasimha Rao gave an account of India's policies, particularly with neighbors and said these are aimed at strengthening peace and cooperation.

Earlier, in the morning the Moldovan president was given a ceremonial welcome on his arrival in the capital on a three-day visit. He is accompanied by a 14-member high-level delegation. Mr. Snegur had meetings with the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and the vice president, Mr. K.P. Narayanan. He told them that his country does not want the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] to become a military or political institution.

Moldova, which became an independent republic following the breaking up of the Soviet Union is an associate member of the CIS.

Talking to newsmen at Rashtrapati Bhaban [President's House], the Moldovan president expressed the hope that his visit will strengthen bilateral cooperation.

President Fetes Moldovan Counterpart

BK1803055593 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The president has said that India and Moldova share many common values and aspirations. Speaking at a banquet in honor of the visiting Moldovan president, Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, in New Delhi, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma said that both the countries are committed to universal values of peace, democracy, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. He said that all issues inherited from the dissolution of the former Soviet Union should be resolved in positive, peaceful, and constructive spirit.

In his reply, the Moldovan president said that the economic cooperation between the two countries will be fruitful. The two countries are to strengthen bilateral ties. They are to sign six agreements covering economic cooperation and trade. The prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, yesterday said that humanitarian assistance of 50 lakh rupees, mostly medicines, will be given to Moldova.

Press Release Issued on Visit, Talks

BK1803110593 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 0903 GMT 18 Mar 93

["Press release dated 17-3-93"]

[Text] In the course of the first day of his programme, H.E. [His Excellency] Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, president of the Republic of Moldova, called on the president today. Our vice president, prime minister and minister of external affairs called on him. The call by the prime minister was followed by official level talks and then a one-to-one

meeting with the prime minister. During the call on the president of India, our president extended a cordial welcome to him as first president of Moldova visiting India. Referring to the links that existed in the past, our president mentioned that India wanted to strengthen its bilateral ties with Moldova. Mr. Snegur dwelt on the situation inside his own country, especially the problem of separatism that they were facing. He hoped, however, that it should be possible to tackle this problem through consultations within CSCE (the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the UN.

During the call by our vice president, he invited the president of Moldova to give his views about Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Mr. Snegur gave his assessment of the Moldovan situation vis-a-vis the CIS, pointing out that Moldova was an associate member as it had not signed the charter.

Moldova wanted to concentrate on economic aspects and does not want the CIS to become a military/political institution. Mr. Snegur also mentioned that he thought that the Central Asian situation, over-all, would soon stabilise. He had just visited Turkmenistan and was able to see the situation for himself. Moldova also stood at the cross-roads of Europe and wanted strong relations with Europe. But their concentration in near future would be on economic links with CIS.

In the call by the prime minister, the prime minister announced a gift of Rs. [rupees] 5 million worth of humanitarian assistance to Moldova, mostly medicine. He welcomed the president to India and stated that agreements that would be signed in the course of visit would provide a strong basis for future bilateral relations to strengthen. There was a free market approach in both countries which provided a useful potential for trade as well as for exchange of information and promotion of people-to-people contacts, quite apart from contacts at government-to-government level.

The prime minister also offered to facilitate exchange of experts and also scholarships for provision of training facilities in India.

The Moldovan president mentioned that they were moving to a market economy and away from centralization of days of the Soviet Union. They wanted to develop economic and commercial links with the West and with Asia but could not ignore existing economic ties with CIS countries.

He touched upon the problems created by the existence of different Bosnia, these would be solved in near future. [sentence as received] While thanking the prime minister for the humanitarian assistance, he added that he saw strong possibility for cooperation in the areas of science and technology, agriculture and electronic industries.

Earlier, Moldova concentrated on making only unfinished products in days of the Soviet Union but would now like to turn towards value-added and processed goods. He also expressed his appreciation for the prime minister's offer of experts and on scholarships, and emphasised the importance of cultural contacts also.

In their one-to-one meeting, Mr. Snegur conveyed his assessment of Moldova's relations with neighbouring countries. Both Moldova and India were multi-ethnic societies and, therefore, had a lot in common and could exchange experiences in this field. The prime minister gave an account of our policies in the region, especially vis-a-vis our neighbours, which were aimed at strengthening peace and cooperation. He stressed that India wishes to pursue the dialogue which had commenced at the highest level in the course of his visit. He also hoped that India and Moldova could cooperate in international forums to mutual benefit.

Finally, the Moldovan president invited the prime minister to visit Moldova, an invitation which the prime minister accepted with pleasure.

Agreements on the following subjects will be signed in course of the visit: Declaration of principles and directions of cooperation, protocol on foreign office consultations, technical and economic cooperation, culture, science and technology, and trade.

Iran

Khamene'i Reported Injured in Tehran Explosion

LD1703232293 Madrid RNE-1 Radio Network in Spanish 2301 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In the capital of Iran, a powerful explosion may have caused the death of the spiritual leader of the country, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, according to a communique from the office of the former president, Abol-Hasan Bani-Sadr, in Paris. According to the same source, 'Ali Khamene'i was injured, although they do not know whether he was assassinated or not.

In the attack carried out on his home, which has not been officially confirmed, numerous people may have died. Access roads to his residence have been cut off and a dinner with parliamentarians cancelled. [passage omitted]

Khamene'i 'Perhaps Killed'

LD1703233093 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 2300 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] In Tehran, the spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamene'i has been injured during an explosion in his home, and he was perhaps killed. This has been declared this evening in Paris by a spokesman of the former Iranian President Bani Sadr who lives in exile in Paris. The spokesman said several people were killed in this explosion, which is reported to have taken place early this afternoon in Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamene'i became the guide of the revolution following the death of Ayatollah Khomeyni in 1989.

Foreign Ministry Denies, Criticizes Report

LD1803062793 Tehran IRNA in English 0600 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—A reliable law enforcement official today described a REUTER report on a bomb blast at the residence of the leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i as "fabricated and politically-motivated."

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, asked about the reason for publishing such false reports, said, "this is not the first time the foreign news agencies are airing unfounded materials quoting (the deposed President Abolhassan) Bani-Sadr."

Bani-Sadr had recently also claimed that Iranian security forces had arrested Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri and killed or wounded several people at his residence in Qom. The ayatollah's office later denied the reports.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman reiterated that the spread of such reports by the British news agency was politically-motivated. He said another objective of the report published on the eve of the International Qods Day, could be to overshadow Friday's [19 March] worldwide rallies in support of the Palestinian combatants.

The leader of the Islamic Republic held congregational prayers at noon on Wednesday at Imam Khomeyni's husseiniyeh (his residence). An IRNA reporter who attended the prayers observed total calm and tranquility in the area. The leader of the Islamic revolution after holding Wednesday's mass prayers heard a sermon by a preacher.

Bani-Sadr: Attack 'Verified'

LD1803092493 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 0700 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] What really took place in Teheran yesterday? Both the former Iranian president, Bani-Sadr, and Ayatollah Rowhani, the spiritual leader of Shi'ites living in Europe, claim that there was an attack on Ayatollah Khamene'i's home. The Iranian press agency denies this, and speaks of fabrications, but former president Bani-Sadr stands by his version. He was interviewed by Patrice Perrin from Radio France Internationale:

[Begin Bani-Sadr recording] The first indication was that there was an explosion in which 20 people died. We do not really know if 20 people died or not, but we verified that there had been an explosion. The second indication we received was that the attack was aimed at Khamene'i himself. Was he injured? Is he dead or alive? We do not know; we are waiting for more details. [end recording]

The explosion reportedly took place between 1400 and 1500 Teheran time yesterday. Bani-Sadr's associates add two details to the aforementionned news: The road leading to Ayatollah Khamene'i's home was blocked by security forces and a dinner with Iranian deputies Khamene'i was due to preside over was cancelled.

Khamene'i Reported Speaking on Day of Alleged Attack

LD1803113093 Tehran IRNA in English 1108 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA—Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i here Thursday [18 March] called on Iranian and world Muslims to massively participate in the international "al-Qods" [Jerusalem] day rallies to be held tomorrow, the last Friday of the holy month of "Ramadan".

Interviewed by IRNA, Ayatollah Khamene'i deplored that the Zionists are being aided and abetted for their exerting of heavy pressures on the Palestinian nation and that many of those who used to speak of Palestinian aspirations, have left alone the oppressed Palestinian nation.

"Today, the Palestinian combatants and oppressed nation need the support of Muslim nations," he said.

The leader asked the Iranian and other Muslim people the world over to take part more enthusiastically in the al-Qods day rallies.

He said world Muslims by supporting the struggles of the Palestinian people will boost the morale of Palestinian combatants.

Interviewed on Qods Day

LD1803114093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Dear listeners, as we informed you earlier in the bulletin, His Eminenece Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, in a brief interview with our correspondent today called on the people of Iran and other Muslim and revolutionary nations of the world to participate extensively in the international Qods [Jerusalem] Day march. We invite you to listen to the detail of the interview:

[Begin recording] [Khamene'i] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. For the past few nights I have watched inteviews with people on television about Qods Day, which show their awareness and intelligence, their presence and sense of responsibility, and in the replies they gave. Perhaps it is not necessary for me to say anything to our people in this regard.

However, since the issue of Qods is important, and since today, unfortunately, the Zionists are being supported in their intensified pressure on the Palestinians, also because of the fact that a large number of those who chanted slogans [in support of] Palestinian aspirations have left this oppressed nation half way, and since today the Palestinian combatants and the oppressed Palestinian nation are in need of world support and the sympathy of their Muslim brothers, I advise our dear people and also the entire Muslim nations to hold this year's march with greater warmth and with even greater

enthusiasm than ever before. This will help the Palestinians' struggle. This will help to put right the affairs of the Palestinians, which implies that the Palestinians, who are the owners of their homes, must regain their rights, God willing. We hope that our dear nation will be successful and will take this step successfully, like all the other long and good steps that they have taken.

[Correspondent] Thank you very much.

[Khamene'i] May you be successful. God willing. [end recording]

Khamene'i Dismisses 80 Imams in Power Struggle

PM1803094693 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Battle for Authority Rages in Iran; 80 Imams Who Opposed Khamene'i Dismissed"]

[Text] Tehran, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Over 80 mosque imams have been dismissed because of their refusal to accept 'Ali Khamene'i, the Iranian supreme guide, as the highest religious authority, well-informed sources said yesterday.

Khamene'i is trying to control mosque imams who deliver Friday sermons by appointing 60 of his supporters to sensitive positions.

Those who rejected Khamene'i's religious authority say that he is a politician and his position is determined by the political constitution and has nothing to do with the Shiite religious authority. As for his supporters, they say that he is the religious guide and has full powers to suspend even the laws concerning religious principles, and therefore he should be obeyed. As for those who were dismissed, they were supporters of Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Musavi Julbijani [as transliterated], who has become over recent months the supreme Shiite religious authority.

Sources say that some of those dismissed were supporters of Ayatollah Hoseyn 'Ali Montazeri. They have been prevented from delivering their Friday sermons in government mosques.

Montazeri, who has been under house arrest since 1989, had announced the closure of his religious institute.

Khamene'i's recent step is considered an attempt by him to tighten government control on mosques and religious institutes.

According to the tradition followed in Iran, mosques and religious schools are run by the Shiite religious authorities and financed by private funds and donations. But Khamene'i says that there is no need to separate the government and religious establishments because of the presence of the clergymen in the government.

Iraqi Units Reportedly Cross Border 8 Feb, Kill 14

LD1803091693 Tehran IRNA in English 0640 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] United Nations, New York, March 18, IRNA—Fourteen Iranians were martyred, two wounded and 33 persons were taken captive and later released following a major Iraqi military infiltration into Iran on February 8, 1993, reported Iran's permanent mission here.

Iran's Ambassador to the U.N. Gholam 'Ali Khoshru [name as received] in a letter to the U.N. Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali dated March 17, said that 70 anti-revolutionary elements under Iraqi protection dispatched from Iraq "in gross violation of the ceasefire", crossed the internationally recognised boundaries and infiltrated "Beitoush" village, in the border town of Sardasht, south of the border pillar in "Lak Lak" heights.

The group then advanced to Nazarabad village, north of Talesh mountain and southeast of Vuri mountain and later extended their incursion into Bizdeh village and after totally surrounding the village, launched an attack against two military bases located in the middle and northern part of the village.

In the course of this organised attack, the two military bases together with the local station of the Iranian radio and television were destroyed and set ablaze. The equipment of the radio and television were removed and taken to Iraq.

Khoshru reiterated that Iran held the Iraqi Government "responsible for the crimes and atrocities initiated from Iraq and perpetrated by mercenary and subversive elements against the territory of the Islamic republic."

President Receives Nakhichevan's Aliyev

LD1703141593 Tehran IRNA in English 1349 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—The visiting head of the State Council of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan Geydar Aliyev discussed bilateral relations with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Wednesday [17 March]. Aliyev said that great love and respect of his people for the Iranian officials and people necessitates further broadening of bilateral relations. Aliyev who arrived here yesterday also expressed hope that increased cooperation and exchange of visits among the two nations will make up for 70 years of separation beween the two nations.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed satisfaction with promotion of bilateral ties and said the Islamic Republic of Iran is interested in people of Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan republics and would spare no efforts to solve their problems. The president also hoped that hostilities between the two neighbouring republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan will come to an end soon.

President Meets Outgoing French, New Zealand Envoys

LD1703175693 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] This morning, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani separately received the French and New Zealand ambassadors at the end of their term. During the meeting with the French ambassador, the president, thanked him for his efforts to expand Iranian-French cooperation. He said: In Europe we count on France and we hope that this mutual cooperation will help with the expansion of relations in all fields. Praising the role of the Islamc Republic as a great power which has always enjoyed French affection and respect, the French ambassador stressed the need for the expansion of cooperation.

The New Zealand ambassador described relations between the two countries as strong and active and stressed the need for continued cooperation. Expressing the wish of his country for the expansion of relations, New Zealand's ambassador conveyed the desire of New Zealand's prime minister to visit Tehran and this was welcomed by Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Taqavi To Head Palestine Islamic Revolution Conference

LD1703111093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Majles Speaker Mr. Nateq-Nuri has issued an edict appointing Hojjat ol-Eslam Taqavi as the secretary general of the International Conference in support of the Islamic Revolution of Palestine. The edict underlines the significance of the task by pointing to particular situations around the world, the achievements of the Palestinian people's intifidah, and the Islamic Republic of Iran's huge responsibility as the homeland of the Islamic world.

Office in Support of Palestine Islamists Opens

LD1703120593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Excerpt] On the eve of the International Jerusalem Day, the students office in support of Palestine's Islamic revolution opened in Tehran. The main objectives behind the opening this office is to respond to the call of the leader [Khamene'i], to keep the issue of Palestine alive, to increase the students' political knowledge, to declare stances of the country's student community and to promote the morale of opposing oppression among the students.

Speaking to reporters this morning, Mr. Hoseyn Harati, the training affairs deputy of the Education Ministry, announced the above and said: This office is set up in response to the desire expressed by the students and the country's education affairs officials to establish links with students from other countries and particularly the Islamic countries. The name was chosen in view of the importance of Palestine's revolution. He added: The supreme council for compiling regulation of this office will include cultural and political officials. The training deputy of the Education Ministry [Harati himself] will be its head, and the secretary of the council will be the supervisor of the country's students Islamic association. [passage omitted]

Over 500,000 Afghan Refugees Return Voluntarily

LD1703174993 Tehran IRNA in English 1606 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—A total of 422,051 Afghan refugees have voluntarily left Iran for their homeland since the triumph of the Mojahedin over Najibullah's Marxist regime, disclosed an official here today.

Deputy Chief of the Interior Ministry's Department for Expatriate Affairs 'Abd-al-Reza Haji-Arab said the figure also included the 22,051 repatriated after a trilateral agreement between Iran, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The said group of refugees were assisted in cash by the UNHCR and returned to their homeland via the 'Doqarun' and 'Taybad' borders.

Haji-Arab added that three border posts are expected to set up in Khorasan Province and another one in Sistan-Baluchestan Province to help the Afghan refugees return home under the UNHCR supervision.

National Economic Structure for 1992-93 Outlined

LD1703214193 Tehran IRNA in English 1759 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA—The policy of balancing national economic structure for attaining economic balance together with fast economic growth in the Iranian calendar year 1371 (March 21, 1992-March 20, 1993) brought a more stable and a more-firmly based national economy this year.

Relying vastly on its potentials and her material resources and manpower and also profiting from foreign consultations and cooperation for creating new capacities in the agriculture, industries, and mining sector Iran's economic planners took fruitful action towards the goal.

In the calendar year 1371 the national economy was directed towards more stability and health, actual economic prosperity, better utilization of natural resources and national capacities, better involvement of the private sector in production, elimination of excessive regulatory checks, better utilization of national and foreign investments, as well as the rehabilitation of the national infrastructure.

This year the rehabilitation of the buildings that were damaged during the Iraq-Iran war continued faster than it did in the previous years and foreign sources admitted that more than two-thirds of the economic rehabilitation of Iran had been successfully carried out.

During the same year, there were better mass participation in the national reconstruction, creation of new economic industrial capacities, and better public involvement in the national economic activities, and in the role of the public sector in giving direction to the macro-economy, and also the involvement of the entrepreneurs in the micro-economy was more marked.

There was also widespread efforts for leading the national economy towards the international economy and foreign relations were oriented more towards safeguarding national interests and reaching the goals of mid-term and long-term economic plans and eliminating hindrances to the national economic growth.

In the year 1371 economic policies were more consistent with economic realities and with actual market trends and current prices, and fundamental measures were taken to attain the goals of the first five-year national development plan that is to conclude in 1993 (in the Iranian calendar year 1372).

To attain a rapid economic growth was the principal goal of the administration of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. The growth of the national economy continued in the Iranian calendar year 1371.

Governor of the Bank Markazi (Central Bank) of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Hoseyn 'Adeli said recently that national economic growth in 1371 was between eight and nine per cent. During the two years immediately before that the average national economic growth was about 11 per cent.

To attain an economic growth of eight per cent during the first National Development Plan (1368-72) [1989-1993] has been a principal goal of the administration, and the actual growth figure has been higher than the target figure, despite the fact that at the outset of the development plan Western sources considered the target growth figure as being impossible to attain.

Another goal of the administration has been to suppress inflation. To attain that goal it was decided to control the cash flow, minimize budget deficit, and ensure a continual growth of gross national produce in a bid to attain balanced prices at the market. According to the blueprint of the National Development Plan the goal in that respect was to reduce the budget deficit from rls [rials] 2,146 billion in the year 1367 to about rls 92.5 billion in the year 1372.

As a result of the policies of the administration for increasing income resources and improving the cost structure the budget deficit fell considerably and in the national budget bill for the year 1372 as proposed to the Islamic Consultative Assemoly (majlis) by the president it was said that in the year 1370 the rate of budget deficit was 14.6 per cent and that in 1371 it would probably be less than nine per cent. In the national budget act for the national budget in 1372 the budget deficit has been estimated to be an actual zero.

During the past few years the structure of the public sector expenditures has been hopefully changed. The proportion of development credits to the total public sector expenditures that was 19.4 per cent in the year 1367 went up to 31.2 per cent in the year 1370. The growth is expected to reach about 59 per cent in the year 1372.

The increase in the share of development credits along with the increase in current expenditures during the past few years has intensified inflationary pressures. Although the administration intends to push down the rate of growth of the cost of goods and services from about 28.5 per cent in the year 1367 to 8.9 per cent in the year 1372, the need for appropriating credits in order to ensure economic growth, and for establishing a proper economic strcture, and carrying out large industrial projects and completing other on-going projects has somehow checked the efficiency of anti- inflationary devices.

In the month of Aban, 1371 (Nov. 1992) the index of prices of goods and services was 20.5 per cent of the same index in the same month in the previous year. The growth of the same index in 1991 was 19.6 per cent. The wholesale price index of goods in Aban 1371 was up by 31.8 per cent as compared with the same month in the previous year and on the average during the first eight months of the year 1371 was up by 30.4 per cent as compared to the same period in the previous year.

Economists hope that as the budget deficit will drop to an actual zero in the year 1372 and as many projects become operational the fight against inflation will be relatively successful in the next Iranian calendar year.

Despite the fact that the national plan for improving the pricing system was followed up in the year 1371 and despite the offering of the foreign currencies to most production businesses in Iran at floating rates the inflation had a conspicuous impact on the prices of goods and services throughout the year.

The balancing of the parity rate of the foreign currencies and the tri-parity system of the foreign currencies in Iran (that is the official exchange rate at which the rial is the strongest, the competitive rate, and the floating rate) continued through the 1371 and caused a dwindling by the administration of the foreign currencies at the official exchange rates and a more extensive offer of those currencies at floating rates.

The idea of introducing a uni-parity system of the rial against the major foreign currencies is being followed up in Iran, and it is said that at the turn of the upcoming Iranian calendar year (March 21, 1993) the parity system at the competitive rate will be discontinued.

As domestic production went up in the wake of the offer to the production enterprises of the foreign currencies at floating rates and of the restructuring of the pricing system at the local markets imports dropped and non-oil exports showed a promising outlook. The national economy is now gearing towards the competitive system and many items locally produced have good promises at the foreign markets as they improve in quality and quantity and as they conform to the internationally-recognized standards.

The process of economic liberation became more marked as economically unpromotive regulations were abandoned, and as the private sector was better involved in the economic activities. During 1371 the securities of many industrial factories were offered to the public through the Tehran stock exchange market, and also through the banking system of Iran, and also by independent negotiation and public sale.

In 1371 the sale of the securities was not as well as it was in the previous year which indicated more realistic decisions of the economic agents and a restructuring of the financial framework of factories and industries.

Despite that the sale of securities continued as efforts were made for ensuring the profitability of the businesses of industries and factories, although the restrucuring of the economic system and the balancing of the profit of business dealings on the basis of the realistic economic costs somewhat restricted many of the brokering and middleman type businesses and led the course of the economy along a more logical path.

Unemployment was somewhat checked primarily because many of the factories and industries became operational and created new jobs in various parts of the country.

The administration intends to gradually transform the low-output jobs to poduction jobs, reduce actual and latent unemployment and increase actual output, the aim for which susbstantial action was taken during the current year. The administration has plans to reduce the unemployment rate to 13.4 per cent of the total potential work force which seems to be an attainable goal. At the outset of the first five-year National Development Plan the unemployment rate in Iran was 15.9 per cent.

Oil and gas:

By the end of 1370 (March 1992) oil production in Iran went up to about 4.5 million bpd [barrels per day]. In the subsequent year 1371 extensive operations were undertaken to identify new oil resources at the Caspian Sea, work offshore oil at the Persian Gulf, and better exploit existing oil wells which contributed to the further development of the oil industry in Iran that year.

The Oil Ministry estimated a yearly revenue on oil exports of about dlrs [dollars] 16.5 billion. The Iranian oil minister said recently that in the first half of the Iranian calendar year 1371 Iran's revenue on oil sales was upwards of dlrs eight billion. As oil prices somewhat went up towards the end of 1371 it seems the expected oil revenues must have been earned. There was also a fairly extensive effort for finding new clients and maneuvering among more diverse clients which was relatively successful.

In the area of natural gas a contract, the biggest of its kind since the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979, to the tune of dlrs 1.71 billion was entered into between the National Iranian Oil Company and a consortium of Italian, Japanese, and Russian firms for working the 'Pars' gasfield in southern Iran. Once the gasfield has become operational Iran's daily output of natural gas is to go up to one billion cubic meters and its gaseous liquids is to go up to 50,000 bpd.

In 1371 gas supply projects to towns and cities continued more vigorously than in the previous years which will increase both household and industrial consumption of natural gas thereby lowering the domestic demand for oil as fuel.

Iran, in 1371, played a more active role in the affairs of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and was instrumental in the adoption of policies aimed at stabilizing the status of oil at the international markets. OPEC, facing a glutted market internationally and falling prices in late summer and autumn of 1992, opted for compensatory decisions in the meeting of its member ministers in Vienna February 13, 1992 which helped boost prices at the turn of 1993.

The year 1371 was also a success year for Iran in terms of contracts for oil sale to foreign companies, including, of course, the American companies, and higher investment on oil industry renovation schemes, and barter trade contracts in the petrochemical sector.

Industries and mining:

Iran's industrial output showed a marked growth in 1371. The elimination of unnecessary administrative checks in the area of selling industrial products, the supply to industries and factories of foreign currencies at competitive and floating rates consistent with the demand by the industry sector, purchase of machinery for many factories and replacement of many of those machineries along with the inauguration of new plants and factories helped promote industrial output.

Within the framework of the first five-year National Development Plan, by the end of the Iranian calendar year 1371, upwards of 3,000 plants were inaugurated. The International Iron and Steel Institute said in its annual 1992-report that during that year Iran produced 2,964,000 tons of raw steel, and 709,000 tons of sponge iron that was up by 34.5 and 29.8 per cent as compared to that of the previous year. In terms of growth rate, in that respect, Iran ranked second internationally after Portugal.

Reports from Esfahan Province say in that province alone in 1371 as many as 55 licences were issued to the private sector for setting up plants and factories involving a total capital investment of about rls 51.7 billion, plus additional operation licences for another 46 plants and factories involving a total capital investment of rls 24.8 billion.

The Mubarakeh steel complex in Esfahan Province, which has 28 units, can produce 2.4 million tons of various classes of rolled steel sheets. Among other important plants that were inaugurated in Esfahan in 1371 was the D.M.T. synthetic plant and a lubrication oil complex.

In Khuzestan Province in 1371 as many as 49 industrial projects involving a combined capital investment of rls 30.6 billion became operational. They included food processing industries, textile factories, wood and paper mills, metal industries, and electrical, electronic, chemical, and heavy industries.

In Bakhtaran Province 23 plants and factories involving a combined capital investment of rls 14.3 billion became operational, and elsewhere in Sistan-Baluchestan Province 15 industrial projects including a plant for producing liquid oxygen, melamine tableware, paper tissues, high-pressure hoses with a combined capital investment of rls 4.1 billion became operational. In Kerman Province, this year, 69 industrial projects in the area of electricity and electronics, food processing and pharmaceuticals involving a combined capital investment of rls 17.75 billion became operational.

The industries department of Fars Province this year issued 63 operational licences for plants and factories that involved a combined capital investment of rls 12.1 billion, and were mainly in the area of chemical, cellulose, textile, leather, electricity and electronic, food processing and pharmaceutical industries.

In the absence of official figures yet of the growth in the output of industrial products in Iran in 1371 it can only be said that the inauguration of new plants and factories have prepared the means for higher industrial output. In 1371 more than 90 per cent of the actual capacity of the existing industries were utilized, a marked improvement against only 30 per cent in the year 1367 (March 21, 1988, March 20, 1989).

This year substantial effort was made to carry out on-going projects and undertake new ones. In Zanjan Province, for example, the first phase of an ambitious lead and zinc project with an annual output of 40,000 tons of pure lead and 12,000 tons of silver was inaugurated. In Fars Province 13 magnesium, marmarite, gypsum, and construction rocks mines became operational, and in Sirjan, Kerman Province, phase one of 'Gol-Gohar' iron ore mill with an hourly output of 2,000 tons involving a capital investment of rls 140 billion plus another dlrs 280 million were among the major accomplishments in the area of mining industries in Iran this year.

Agriculture:

Agriculture Minister 'Isa Kalantari has said that in the agriculture sector this year 27.6 million tons of strategic products were produced in Iran, that is three million tons more than it was last year.

Wheat production this year was a record 10-plus million tons, barley was 3.67 million, rice paddy 2.5 million, sugar beets 5.5 million, potatoes 2.6 million, onions upwards of one million, and lentils about 625,000 tons. The implementation of improved agricultural methods, training of farmers and agriculturists, use of high-yield seeds and plants, appropriation of agriculture credits, introduction of mechanized farming in many agriculture areas, as well as protection policies and purchase guarantees by the administration this year were responsible for better yields.

Foreign trade:

Optimization of economic resources at the national and international level and exploitation of maximum resources would be possible only by means of a solid foreign trade policy and adherence to the comparative priority law in commerce.

The goal of commerce is not only to respond to short-term needs, but also to acquire advanced technology, capital goods, and the state of the art machinery for industrialization and for passing through an era of economic backwardness.

The substitution of an imports-intensive economy by one of increasing exports was the main element in the new foreign trade of Iran in 1371 which helped prosper non-oil exports by the country this year.

In the first half of 1371 as much as 1,542,000 tons of non-oil goods costing rls 85,964 million (dlrs 1,228 million) were exported by air, by land or by sea. Those exports weighed 24 per cent more than same category exports in the corresponding period in the previous year, and cost 21 per cent more than the same exports. The value of total exports in 1371 is estimated to have been about dlrs four billion, considerably higher than that of dlrs 2.6 billion in the previous year.

Imports during the first ten months of 1371 were about 15 per cent less than they were in the corresponding period in the previous year and had a better composition which better served the industry and mining sector. In 1370 the value of total imports was about dlrs 28 billion.

In 1371, Germany, Japan and Italy continued to remain in their previous position as Iran's biggest trade partners while an effort was made to establish trade relations with the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union, some of them northern neighbors of Iran.

The meeting in Tehran of the ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) earlier this year, and ECO's decision to slash customs tariffs between member states as a device for boosting their inter-trade was a new stride in that area. Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said this year that ECO offers the best framework for

exploiting latent economic capacities in its member states. Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan are member states of ECO whose minister-envoys met in Quetta, Pakistan earier this winter. They also reached agreements which is said to be very helpful for promoting the economies of ECO member states.

The formation of joint economic commissions by Iran on the one side and each of the countries Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Armenia, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan on the hand, as well as agreements with them in the area of economy, trade, industries and agriculture and transit has been very helpful as a forward step for identifying new markets.

Iran can offer a conduit for the foreign trade of her northern neighbors and transit their exports on to the Persian Gulf and across to the international waters, and the strategic value of the country in that respect has already been fully established.

As for trade with the eastern Europe, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary pose as relatively more likely countires for more extensive trade with Iran in the future.

Meanwhile Iran's cooperation with such African countries as Zambia, Gabon, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Guinea was more marked this year with promises for the future.

In 1371, Iran's economic relations with Malaysia, Indonesia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and China was more dynamic than in the previous years.

This year, Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani visited Jakarta, Indonesia, for the summit meet of the non-aligned member states. On other occasions he also visited Beijing and Islamabad and engaged in fruitful talks, especially in economic and cultural areas, with the highest ranking authorities in those countries.

Trade with Europe, too, was marked with significant developments. Iran's trade and banking relations with Germany, Italy, Greece, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, and Finland, among others, further developed offering good prospects for implementation of joint projects with those countries as well as with Japan even in free trade areas. Foreign currencies and their parity rates in Iran:

Rampant fluctuations of the leading foreign currencies in Iran was somewhat checked this year, mainly as a result of the offer at floating rates of those currencies to licensed businessmen and industries although it led to rather abrupt changes in parity rates during February and March.

The major elements responsible for the weakening rial against those currencies was the official declaration of the application of a unified single-parity system (except for exemptions singled out in the national budget bill) between the rial and the foreign currencies in the national budget earlier in the year, pharmeceutical needs, defence expenditures, and psychological responses by brokers of foreign currencies.

Most experts maintain that relatively adequate foreign currencies will be supplied to applicants this coming year, and that the psychological response in the market will gradually diminish over the spring of 1372. Because over the past few years non-oil exports have increased and because oil revenues for this coming year has been estimated to be less than dlrs 18 (eighteen) billion the supply of foreign currencies at the market will become gradually regular and system-led.

Today the parity rate of the dollar at the free foreign currencies makets in Iran is about rls 1,600 rials to the dollar, relatively higher than rls 1,445 this day last year. Before January 1993 the dollar was traded at the free markets here at about rls 1,500 to the dollar.

Team Appointed to Promote Cultural Activity

LD1403114293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Mar 93

[Text] In view of the role and responsibility of popular cultural centers and institutions, such as mosques, in confronting the cultural onslaught, the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, in its 302d session, approved the formation of a team charged with organizing and supervising cultural activities in those mosques that have the appropriate preparedness and resources. The team will consist of the minister of culture and Islamic guidance, the head of the council for the coordination of mosques' affairs, the head of the Islamic Propaganda Organization, the commander of the Basij [mobilization of the oppressed] Resistance Force, and the head of the Endowments and Charitable Affairs Organization.

In the session, parts of the policy on higher education to be included in the country's second development plan were also approved. The expansion of the responsibilities and rights of universities, higher education centers, and government research institutions were among the points approved.

Permits Needed To Import, Sell, Screen Video Films

LD1303163293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Mar 93

[Text] Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Larijani today in an interview with reporters announced that the import of video films and activities related to the production and distribution of video tapes as well as the sale and renting of these tapes should take place with the permission of the minister of culture and Islamic guidance's committee for assessing cinematic films. Larijani also said that the ministry will be giving grants and

providing facilities to assist in setting up halls for the screening of video films in regions where there are no cinemas. The coordination councils of mosques can help by placing their halls at the disposal of people for this purpose.

Larijani pointed out that breaking the regulations set down by the judiciary in this connection, will carry punishments. He added: All individuals or institutions, mosques, and councils can come to the Office for the Assessment of Cinema Affairs, as from the start of the new year [21 March 1993], and apply for their permits to exhibit.

Nepal

Pro-Democracy Student Dies After Clash With Communists

BK1703002093 Hong Kong AFP in English 1733 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] Kathmandu, March 16 (AFP)—A pro-democracy member of the Nepal Students Union (NSU) died Tuesday from wounds sustained in a battle with communist activists at the engineering campus here, witnesses said.

The student's death sparked an anti-communist demonstation here involving more than 10,OOO people, they added.

A statement issued by the NSU Central Committee said: "Bharat Devkota, 22, of Nepal Law Campus, who had received grave injuries, died early Tuesday morning while undergoing treatment at the state- run Bir Hospital."

"The condition of some other students is also serious," it added.

The NSU condemned a series of clashes on the engineering campus since Sunday, which began when pro-democracy students refused to take part in a general strike called by Nepal's four communist parties to protest the government of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

The strike was called to show opposition to a government decision allowing India to build part of a hydro-electric dam on Nepalese soil and rising electricity prices.

"We denounce the activities designed to invite educational anarchy on campus premises," the statement said, adding that the communists had engaged in a "criminal act."

The demonstration later converged on the banks of the holy Bagmati River, near the Hindu golden temple of Lord Shiva-Pashupati, where the body of Devkota was cremated, witnesses said.

Home Minister Sher Bahadur Deupa told parliament that "the government has ordered an investigation to look into the incident," adding that the "sternest action" would be taken against those found guilty.

The leftist students have also claimed that "merciless" attacks on them by NSU supporters had left some of their colleagues with injuries.

Pakistan

Ex-Prime Minister Junejo Dies in U.S. Hospital

BK1803055293 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in Urdu 0500 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] We announce with profound regret that Mohammad Khan Junejo, a former Pakistani prime minister and president of the Pakistan Muslim League, passed away in a hospital in the U.S. city of Baltimore, Maryland. Efforts are being made to bring his body back to Pakistan.

Government To Increase Defense Budget 10 Percent

BK1503124493 Islamabad THE NATION in English 15 Mar 93 pp 1, 4

[Text] Islamabad—The Government of Pakistan's defence budget will cross the staggering Rs 90 billion mark in the next fiscal year.

The country's Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz told newsmen on Sunday that the defence budget will grow next year by another 10 per cent over the current fiscal's figure of Rs 82 billion.

He said the government was doing so despite mounting pressure from donor countries to cut its defence budget. "No one can stop the government from fulfilling its minimum security requirements," Senator Sartaj observed.

The Minister, however, clarified this increase was in line with the rate of inflation and there was no increase in real terms.

The Government of Pakistan has agreed with the donor agencies to freeze its defence budget in real terms for at least three years. It is one of the five conditionalities imposed upon Pakistan by these agencies.

But he said the President had not declared the government's privatisation policy un-Islamic or against the Constitution as reported by the newspapers. He said the President had only suggested to the government to consult the Council of Common Interest (CCI) on the privatisation of power sector.

He said the government had found out after seeking legal opinion on its privatisation policy that it could not go ahead with the WAPDA [Water and Power Development Authority] privatisation on its own.

The CCI meeting will be held after the Eid [feast at end of the month of Ramadan]. A final date for the meeting, Senator Sartaj said, was still to be decided.

The Minister also said the government had not sent a reply to the President's letter so far, though it planned to do this soon.

Asked abosut the widening budgetary deficit, Senator Sartaj said the ongoing quarter's revenues collection trends were quite encouraging. He maintained the government might succeed in arresting the steep increase in its budgetary deficit by the end of the 1992-93 fiscal.

Government officials say the deficit figure had crossed Rs 100 billion mark in the first half of the current fiscal against the Rs 89 billion figure budgeted for the whole year.

The Minister was talking to journalists at an iftar-dinner [Ramadan fast-breaking dinner] hosted by the Muslim Ambassadors, where Economic Affairs Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali was also present.

Sardar Aseff Ahmed appeared quite satisfied with indications from the aid to Pakistan Consortion. He appeared confident that flow of aid to Pakistan was quite smooth. "I can assure you Pakistan's economic programme will be fully supported by the donors."

"We will get from the aid to Pakistan Consortium whatever we decide to ask for," he said when asked how much he expected in aid from the Consortium.

Sardar Aseff said his talks with the European mission currently visiting Pakistan had proved successful. He said he was looking forward to the visit of a Japanese delegation in a couple of days.

Ways To Achieve Self-Reliance in Defense Viewed

BK1303153393 Lahore PAKISTAN in Urdu 10 Mar 93 p 4

[Editorial: "Alternative Arrangement for the Acquisition of Defense Equipment"]

[Text] Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, the federal minister for defense production, has said that alternative arrangements are being made in the wake of the U.S. stoppage of military aid and its categorical refusal to meet Pakistan's legitimate defense requirements. There is no dearth of defense equipment in the world and Pakistan can buy them from anywhere. It is heartening to note that several countries are ready to transfer technology along with defense equipment, which will help Pakistan achieve self-reliance in defense production and will also enable it to meet the needs of friendly countries.

Pakistan has made remarkable progress in the field of defense production. It can now produce ammunition and small arms, and has succeeded in achieving self-reliance in the field of rocket and missile production. It has also achieved remarkable success in manufacturing aircraft. It has started repairing Mirage and F-16 aircraft and producing spares for these planes. None of its aircraft has been grounded due to nonavailability of the spare parts and all planes are fully operational. Pakistan has also commenced rebuilding tanks.

Lately, Pakistan has turned toward friendly countries, whose attitude has been encouraging. It is acquiring radar from Italy for its Chinese-built F-7 aircraft, which will enhance the performance level of these planes. The defense production minister recently visited Italy, where he held detailed discussions with an arms manufacturing firm which is ready to (?supply) modern radars for the F-7 planes. Presently, the country will buy the required number of these radars and later acquire the technology to manufacture them locally. An agreement to this effect has already been finalized.

Negotiations are under way for the purchase of submarines and other defense equipment from France. Since no formal agreement has yet been signed, the Indian radio report that France has refused to supply defense equipment to Pakistan is totally baseless.

Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani also visited Bulgaria and inspected and assessed its defense production establishments and facilities. Bulgaria is currently producing 23-mm antitank weapon, AK-47 type rifles, AK-47 grenade firing rifles, aircraft-mounted guns, and rocket launching systems. All these items of equipment are easily available to Pakistan and they can be suitable and effective from the defense point of view. Bulgaria's industry minister has given assurance that his country will transfer technology for arms production to Pakistan without any strings attached. The issue of the purchase of T-72 tanks from Poland is being reviewed again. Former Chief of Army Staff, late General Asif Nawaz, visited Poland and tested Polish tanks. After the appointment of the new chief of army staff, the issue of acquisition of T-72 tanks from Poland is being examined afresh. General Headquarters and the new army chief are the competent authorities who will decide whether or not this tank will be useful.

No final decision has yet been made on the purchase of Mirage 2000 planes from France. On the basis of the opinion of the air force, it will be decided as to which aircraft will be more suitable for the country. Pakistan has made remarkable progress toward manufacturing Al-Khalid tanks with the assistance of China. Mass production of these tanks, which are better than India's Arjun tank, will commence by 1997. Our country possesses the basic infrastructure for achieving self-reliance in defense production. We have steel mills, heavy machine building factories, trained and skilled manpower, and we can begin the mass production of different defense equipment soon after the acquisition of modern technology.

Pakistan is a peace-loving country. It has deep interest in the establishment of peace at regional and global level and has been expressing this desire very openly. It has

forwarded proposals to India on several occasions to cut the number of all kinds of weapons, but instead of giving any positive response to these proposals, India has been seen frenetically trying to acquire more and more arms from the United States, Russia, and other countries. India is harboring the ambition of becoming a dominant power in this region. Therefore, whenever it feels it is being challenged or prevented from doing so, it intensifies its negative activities and, at the same time, indulges in baseless propaganda against its smaller neighbors, especially Pakistan. Under these circumstances, smaller countries, including Pakistan, have no other option but to strengthen their defense forces without showing any complacency in this regard.

The United States has stopped economic and military aid to Pakistan, forgetting all norms and principles of friendship and age-old ties. Washington has also suspended the supply of spare parts for the F-16 planes. Under these circumstances, Pakistan has no other option but to make alternative arrangements. It is heartening and encouraging that the equipment for meeting Pakistan's defense needs are available and can be acquired without any difficulty. What is most encouraging is that the country has been offered modern technology to produce defense equipment. Pakistan must take advantage of this offer. Modern technology can be used in different ways. While it is used for producing defense equipment, it can also prove effective in building machinery for other constructive purposes. Pakistan has achieved remarkable expertise in building heavy machinery and [words indistinct].

Bhutto Backs Package Deal To Reduce Presidential Powers

BK1703115893 Karachi DAWN in English 11 Mar 93 p 1

[By Athar Ali]

[Text] London, March 10—The Co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] and the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has spelled out the terms for her party's cooperation in any moves that are made to reduce the powers of the President enshrined in the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution.

"Certainly we want the repeal of the Eighth Amendment. But we want a political package which ensures fair, free, impartial elections in Pakistan under a government which can supervise such election," said Ms. Bhutto.

Ms. Bhutto, who has been approached by other party leaders in recent days in London for her support for some of the proposals they have brought from Pakistan from their sponsors, has made it clear that she wants to see democracy gain ground in Pakistan and would welcome what is done within the context of a democratic Pakistan.

"But what is done to turn one authoritarian ruler into another authoritarian ruler would not be music to the ears of the people of Pakistan," she added.

The People's Party Co-chairman, who was interviewed for the BBC World Service Television, outlined her political programme and also talked about the personal anxieties she has had in raising a family in the absence of her husband who was in jail.

She said during the last five years she had spent merely 160 days with her husband. It has not been easy to bring up her two children in the circumstances. Now she has an addition to her family after the birth of her third child. But she described this as a "professional hazard" because of the nature of her work.

Ms. Bhutto reiterated that there has been no backdoor deal to obtain the release of her husband. She complained that so many cases had been instituted against her husband, so it is relief that now he is out on bail. But many of the party workers are still in jail whose imprisonment is tyranical. Yet she thought it was cynical of some people to talk of deals to get her husband released.

Ms. Bhutto said she accepted the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the National Assembly because she felt it was part of the democratic norm. She wants to see democratic traditions built in Pakistan. She wants democratic and electoral reforms introduced in the country so that it turns into a democratic, liberal state where fair elections are ensured. "The government and the Prime Minister's side offered me (the chairmanship of the committee) on the spur of the moment and it was a good signal that after the 'long march' both sides—the government and the opposition—were giving premium to the legislature. But more should not be read into it than that," said Ms. Bhutto.

She did not agree with the interviewer that there had been criticism of her decision to accept the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee. She said the party was fully united on this decision and the newspapers who suggested that there was some opposition within the party has not named those who "do not agree" with her decision.

Ms. Bhutto said she would not want to head Pakistan or run the government if she did not have the necessary powers that the Constitution of a democratic country gives. "I would like to be able to do something, contribute towards the development of my country and be remembered for that. So it is not just power—I would not be interested in any power-brokering deals as such."

Ms. Bhutto also said if the government was desirous of improving the political situation and move it towards democracy then the economic and political victimisation of those who support the PPP throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan must stop. If that does not happen she would not consider the moves being made to end the Eighth Amendment to be moves for a democratic Pakistan.

Karachi High Court Vacates 6 Sindh Assembly Seats

BK1703155193 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 17 Mar 93

[Text] A division bench of the Sindh High Court in Karachi gave its verdict on five different constitutional petitions today. The court ruled six seats of the Sindh Assembly as vacant. According to the verdict, Abdur Razeq Khan, Sindh Assembly Speaker; Abdus Salam Sheikh, Sindh minister for the Islamic tithe and agricultural tax; Transport Minister Aijaz Ahmed Khan; Haji Shafiqur Rahman; Hashem Ali; and Shahed Mian have been debarred from their seats.

The court admitted a petition by Badar Iqbal, leader of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement-Haqiqi, for hearing and ruled that the speaker's ruling vacating Badar Iqbal's seat has no legal status. The court also termed as illegal the election of Syed Hashem Ali from the seat which was declared vacant due to the resignation of Badar Iqbal. The court dismissed the petitions filed by members of the People's Democratic Alliance of the provincial assembly against Syed Qubul Mohammad, Hanif Sorgar, and others.

Militiamen Seize Stinger Missile in Zhob 16 Mar

BK1803114993 Karachi DAWN in English 18 Mar 93 p 15

[Text] Quetta, March 17—Militiamen rcovered a Stinger missile from a man, who was identified as Mulla Abdul Salam, in a shootout in Zhob, 200 miles north of Quetta on Tuesday [16 March].

A militiaman and two others were injured in the incident when Salam tried to resist the militiamen but he was overpowered.

Mulla Abdul Salam is an Afghan national. Militiamen handed him over to the police for further investigations.

PPI [Pakistan Press International] adds: sizeable quantity of arms and ammunition was also recovered from his hideout.

Indian Government's Anti-Muslim Attitude Criticized

BK1803130993 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 16 Mar 93 p 4

[Editorial: "Explosions in Bombay—India's traditional propaganda"]

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said in Tehran that the blasts in Bombay were aimed at Muslims. Extremist Hindus want to wipe out the Muslims. Communal riots have become an everyday affair in India. The freedom fighters in Kashmir are subjected to untold atrocities. The reality which the prime minister referred to has proved to be correct since the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Muslims, who constitute the largest minority in India, have been deprived of their basic rights since 1947. Indian political parties are now out to launch genocide against the Muslims. In the case of the bomb blasts, the Indian Government is again acting in a blatant prejudicial manner. Making a statement in the parliament the other day, the Indian home minister tried to implicate Pakistan in the bombings. Today Prime Minister Narasimha Rao also spoke of a foreign hand in the incident. However, the Bombay police chief has categorically held the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, one of Sri Lanka's extremist organizations, responsible for the incident. The organization was reportedly involved in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The police chief also said that such bombs were not used by Sikhs in Punjab nor the Muslims in Kashmir. What is amazing is that only the Muslims and Sikhs have been targeted by the Indian security agencies and arrested. At least 1,100 Sikhs and Muslims have been arrested, and according to the UNITED NEWS OF INDIA, the first to be arrested was a Kashmiri Muslim.

We fail to understand why, when a well-informed and responsible person like the Bombay police chief is holding the Tamil guerrillas responsible for the bombings, the Indian prime minister and the home minister should feel that there is a foreign hand in the incident. Sri Lanka cannot carry out subversion in India. The Tamil guerrillas have bases in Madras itself. India holds a disgraceful record of carrying out subversive activities in Pakistan. The Indian Government is always twisting the facts and blaming Pakistan.

That the Hindus have been shedding Muslim blood every now and then is an undeniable reality. Now grounds are being prepared for another such exercise. Instead of defending the Muslims in view of a senior Indian police officer's remarks, and protecting them from any possible trouble, the Indian Government has started arresting the Muslims. It indicates that the Indian Government is working on a well-formulated scheme. Pakistan should not remain satisfied with only issuing a statement that Muslims are being subjected to violence. It should take steps and remain alert as well. India might not only start a propaganda campaign against Pakistan over the blasts, but might also indulge in subversion in keeping with its past behavior. We hope that our intelligence organizations and relevant agencies will take appropriate steps while keeping a close vigil on the situation.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Releases 12 of 17 Indian Fishermen

BK1803091293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Twelve out of 17 Indian fishermen held by LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] in Sri Lanka have been released and they have since returned to Tamil Nadu. Disclosing this in the state assembly today, the chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, said that the Indian High

Commission in Sri Lanka secured the release of fishermen from the LTTE at Vavuniya through the Red Cross.

Military Officials Say India Increasing Naval Patrols

BK1803130493 Hong Kong AFP in English 1247 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Colombo, March 18 (AFP)—India's Navy has stepped up patrols to virtually seal off its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka following a spate of bomb attacks in the commercial centre of Bombay, military officials here said Thursday [18 March].

"There is a marked increase in patrols (by Indians) after last week's bomb blasts. They have virtually sealed off the Palk Strait," a Sri Lankan defence source said.

He said more frigates have been brought in to patrol the narrow strip of sea that separates India's southern state of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula where Tamil rebels are active.

"We don't know the exact numbers, but we have noticed a very definite increase in patrols as well as the number of Indian Navy craft operating in the area after the Bombay incidents," a defence source here said.

Indian authorities had initially suspected that Sri Lanka's dominant Tamil separtist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), may have been behind Friday's bombings which killed nearly 300 people in Bombay.

The LTTE has denied any involvement in the attacks and has said it was probably part of ongoing Muslim-Hindu violence in Bombay.

Sri Lankan and Indian Navies have been cooperating to prevent suspected LTTE rebels moving between Tamil Nadu and the Jaffna peninsula. The intense Indian Naval patrols has also helped Sri Lanka which has only a small Navy.

Meanwhile, the authorities here sounded a bomb alert across the capital and asked the public to report anything suspicious. Security forces have already been placed on red alert across the city.

The LTTE has been accused of setting scores of bombs in Colombo and elsewhere. Tigers are battling for an independent state in Sri Lanka's northern and eastern regions where minority Tamils are concentrated.

Governors Dissolve 7 Provincial Councils

BK1603114093 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Radio Network in English 1045 GMT 16 Mar 93

[Text] The governors of seven provinces—Western, Central, Southern, North-Western, North-Central, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa—have dissolved the Provincial Councils of the respective provinces with effect from today. According to Gazette Extraordinary No. 758.5 of 16 March, 1993 the respective governors have been advised by the chief ministers of these provinces to dissolve these seven Provincial Councils in terms of sub-paragraph B, of paragraph 8, of Article 154 B of the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0936 GMT on 16 March carries a Colombo-datelined item which reports the following: "Sri Lanka's most important local government bodies were dissolved Tuesday, slightly ahead of schedule to clear the way for early elections, the government announced.

"The seven provincial councils were dissolved by their respective governors to clear the way for a ballot on a single day for the bodies whose terms were due to end between April and June, officials said.

"The idea is to have elections on a single day rather than staggering them over a three month period," an official said adding that arrangements have been finalised to conduct the ballot although no firm dates have been fixed.

"President Ranasinghe Premadasa's United National Party (UNP) controls power in all seven councils and an eigth which was held by a minority Tamil party was dismissed some three years ago after it tried to establish independence.

"Colombo established direct rule over the Tamil-majority northeast after sacking the provincial council there. However, elections have not been possible in the region where Tamil rebels are leading a bush war against the government.

"The main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) has already formed an alliance with minor leftist parties to contest the forthcoming provincial elections which would be followed by a presidential ballot in December 1994.]

British Aid Sets Up New Satellite Station

BK1303114093 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 13 Mar 93

[Text] A new satellite station will be set up in Colombo Fort with the British Telecom aid. This objective is estimated to cost 100 million rupees, according to Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication. This new station, which will be equipped with latest technology, will have its messages transmitted in digital form. The new station will benefit subscribers booking overseas calls received through this new station expeditiously. The construction of the station will be handled by Scientific Atlantis of the United States. The ministry also said that the loan assistance obtained from Britain will be paid back within three years.

Garment Industry Earnings Exceed Rs44 Billion in 1992

BK1303114493 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 13 Mar 93

[Text] Total export earnings from the apparel industry exceeded 44 billion rupees last year. The apparel sector is the major foreign exchange earner from Sri Lanka and it has been a leading export sector since 1986. This was disclosed by the minister of export development, Raja Samaranayake, when he inaugurated a workshop on the practical approach to determine a garment factory held at the BMICH [Banadaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall] this morning. Mr. Samaranayake also pointed out that apparel sector employs 2,000 persons directly while providing gainful employment to 150,000 others through spin-off industries. Under the 200 garment factories program, additional employment opportunities will be provided to 100,000 or more young youths. The minister further said that this is the first time that a large-scale export-oriented factory had been set up in the rural area providing a valuable link between the big investor and a large number of educated youths in the rural areas.